

MRS. NEVILLE

HER GRAND-CHILDREN.

A STORY.

By the Author of "The Teacher," "Orphan's Secret," &c.

WITH AN ENGRAVING.



BOSTON :

HENRY AND FRANCIS, 128 WASHINGTON

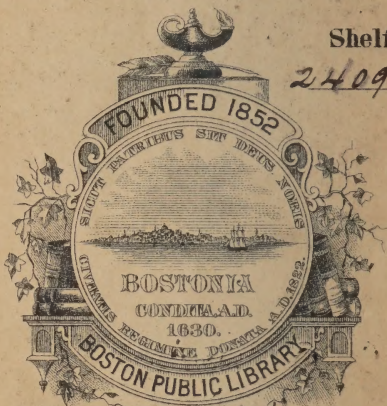
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This good woman occupies a small cottage, or as it is termed a lodge, which is placed at the entrance of these beautiful grounds.

WARNING AND EXAMPLE

TO

THE YOUNG ;

OR

THE STORY

OF

MRS. NEVILLE AND HER GRAND-
CHILDREN.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"THE TEACHER," "ORPHAN SISTERS," "MEMOIR OF
MARY ANN P-----," &c. &c.

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NOV. 23, 1902.

A

WARNING AND EXAMPLE.



CHAPTER I.

"Virtue, the strength and beauty of the soul,
Is the best gift of Heaven : a happiness,
That even above the smiles and frowns of fate,
Exalts great nature's favourites : a wealth
That ne'er encumbers, nor to baser hands
Can be transferr'd : it is the only good."

Armstrong.

How lovely are the works of nature ! The glowing descriptions of the poet, and the exquisite touches of the pencil, alike fail in their attempts to delineate her varied beauties. The admiring eye turns its delighted gaze around, and still surveys, with ever fresh enjoyment, the enchanting scene. How charming to wander here in these delightful paths ! How sweet along this flowery mead, to inhale the breath of morn, and listen to her earliest birds ! How soothing among these leafy shades to contem-

plate, when the moon silvers all with her gentle radiance, and all is quietness, solemnity, and repose ! Surely, if happiness is to be found on earth, he who can look around him, and call these retired and delightful walks, and this most beauteous scenery *his own*, must indeed be blest ! And yet how often observation and experience avouch, that riches with all their attendant pleasures, cannot secure true happiness to their possessor. The immortal spirit still rises above “these gauds of earth,” nor can it be fully satisfied with any thing here below. It will be of no avail at the last great day, to have been the envied proprietor of all this magnificence, and unless we seek after the glories of an eternal inheritance, we shall then be poor indeed. What benefit could Dives derive from all his wealth ? when he lifted up his eyes in that dreadful abode of the wicked, he could not obtain one drop of water to cool his burning tongue. But it is not a necessary consequence, that all who possess the treasures of this world are destitute of divine grace. God forbid ! for then would the rich man be of all men living the most miserable. There are many of the noble and the wealthy, who are faithful stew-

ards of the bounties of divine Providence, and are “ready to distribute, and willing to communicate,” out of those stores which the God of Providence has committed to their trust. Yes, we are allowed

“To boast some rich ones whom the gospel sways.”

On the other hand, it must be observed, that it is not because persons are poor in this world’s goods, that they will necessarily seek the treasures of the kingdom of heaven,

“Alas, not so! the poorest of the flock
Are proud, and set their faces as a rock :
Denied that earthly opulence they choose,
God’s better gift they scoff at and refuse.”

This is unhappily too often the case ; but in the subsequent sketches we shall have occasion to mention one, who, though doomed to struggle with poverty, and encounter some of the roughest and severest storms of adversity, was yet rich in faith, and an heir of the kingdom. My reader, be assured it is neither riches nor poverty, that can recommend us to divine favour. These are merely adventitious circumstances ; wealth may, for wise reasons, be given or withheld, for it is God who fixes our lot, and

“appoints the bounds of our habitation.” Without his favour, where, in the whole compass of the universe, can true happiness be found? Heaven itself could not afford it, for the favour of God is the sole source of true blessedness.

“His single smile has from the first of time,
Fill’d overflowing all the lamps of heaven,
That beam for ever through the boundless sky :
But should He hide his face, th’ astonish’d sun,
And all the extinguish’d stars, would loosening reel
Wide from their spheres, and chaos come again.”

Within the precincts of the magnificent domain, which filled us, as we wandered through it, with these solemn reflections, there resides a poor widow and her grand-daughter. And here, said I, as I thought of her, is one who, though destitute of silver and gold, is yet in the possession of true riches. With Mrs. Neville the shadows of evening are lengthening out, age and infirmity have unfitted her, not only for the active business of life, but for the enjoyment of any worldly good. The prey of sickness for many years, she can no longer go up to the house of God ; but though denied the privilege of worshipping in his courts, yet under her humble roof, she enjoys the heartfelt presence of

Him whose name is Holy ; whose throne is the heavens, and who makes the earth his footstool ; who dwells “ in the high and holy place,” and yet has an eye of kindness upon the contrite and faithful.

This good woman occupies a small cottage, or as it is termed, a lodge, which is placed at the entrance of these beautiful grounds. Her business is to open and shut the great iron gates, which give admittance to visitors. The window of her cottage commands a fine view of the mansion, along with the lawn and river, that lose themselves so beautifully among the trees in the distance. Here the bounty of her noble master permits his servant to wear out the remnant of her days in tranquillity and peace ; she is now hourly looking for an entrance, to be admistered to her into those more blissful mansions above, which Christ has gone before to prepare for his faithful followers. It is not only her desire to be actually ready ; but it is her delight to be habitually so. The day of her life has been cloudy and tempestuous ; darkened with many trials, and imbittered with many afflictions ; but the grace of God has sustained her—and now, like the sun breaking

forth in the evening, it sheds even a double beam of gladness upon her spirit; her cares are now hushed to peace, and religion diffuses the sweet balm of its consolation into her chastened and well-disciplined mind.

It was at an early period of her life, that she first became the subject of serious impressions. Even in childhood she had thought much upon the matters of religion; but it was one little circumstance, we shall relate, which stamped its paramount importance with more peculiar strength upon her heart. As she was returning one evening from the house of God, the solemn truths of eternity yet sounding in her ears, and their vast importance weighing with unusual force upon her mind, surely, thought she, heaven must be a glorious place! but shall it be mine ever to attain it? I cannot by my own merits, that is certain, for I feel myself to be a sinner, O the chief of sinners! and totally undeserving of the divine favour; and yet the Scripture says, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, that he is able to save *unto* the uttermost, and that none who humbly and believingly come unto him, will he in any wise cast out. Yea, they shall never perish, neither

shall any one pluck them out of his hand. Her heart was immediately lifted up in humble, yet ardent prayer to God, that he would be pleased to conduct her footsteps into the straight and narrow path—that he would guide her soul into the way of peace, and lead her on towards “the city which hath foundations, whose maker and builder is God.” While these thoughts were passing in her mind, and her spirit was thus exercised, two persons came up with her, who were likewise returning from the public worship of God. The evening was mild and serene, and very nature seemed to enjoy a sabbath of rest. Their path was far removed from the gay and busy crowd, the voices of their serious converse alone broke upon the solemn stillness. “Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, that leadeth unto life; and few there be that find it.” These words were uttered with great solemnity by one of them, and replied to by the other, who observed, that Christ had called his flock, a *little* flock; and that he feared, among the bulk of mankind, there were very few who would be able to “enter in at the strait gate.” These persons were of that class, who seem to possess neither

doubts nor fears as to their own safety, and talk upon these awful matters, as if from the high pinnacle of their own sure attainments, they had a right to look down with complacency upon all who differ from them in opinion, and with calm indifference to consign them over to their fate of eternal ruin.

It is doubtless a duty incumbent upon us all, to make a stand—a firm stand for the truth as it is in Jesus ; but when our opinions upon matters, which involve not in them the great essentials of salvation, happen to differ from those of others, who yet in all essential points, are fixed with equal stability upon the Rock of Ages, it is neither kind, nor is it Christian thus to treat them with neglect, and to pass them by with indifference. Such conduct the blessed Saviour most pointedly condemns.

The conversation was carried on for some time in this strain, and many daring and speculative opinions were hazarded ; but not one word of consolation, of mercy, or of hope, was wafted upon the breeze. Alas ! the arrow was stricken deep into the bosom of the wounded deer. She shuddered at the awful thought that perhaps *she* might be among the number of

those who should "strive to enter in at the strait gate," but should not be able. Her spirit was overwhelmed with horror, her feelings were expressed in groans and tears. "Lord save me, or I perish," was at last her agonized cry, and her determination was, through divine grace, to cast herself at the feet of the Saviour ; for, said she, "if I perish, I will perish there." This self-dedication was soon followed with a feeling of joy and peace in believing. "I have," she now tells me, "continued in the faith to the present hour, 'hitherto the Lord hath helped me,' I am not much upon the mount, indeed, I am oftener in the valley, but yet I have a good hope through grace."

Thus have we given a short outline of Mrs. Neville's history, as it regards her reception of divine truth. Like Jacob, she had wrestled for the blessing, like Israel she had prevailed : but in pursuance of our object, we must enter with more minuteness into particulars. This we propose to do in the ensuing chapter.

CHAPTER II.

“Then let me seek that mightiest One,
Who, while adoring seraphs bow,
Looks down from his eternal throne,
The widow’s lonely lot to bless,
And soothe and save the fatherless.”

Dale.

WE have said that Mrs. Neville had to struggle with difficulties; her husband and her children were torn from her by the hand of death. Two little grandchildren were left, the sole surviving relics of her family. Their father had forsaken his humble home in early life. In an unhappy, thoughtless hour, he enlisted into the army. After which, many years passed away that brought no tidings to gladden the hearts of his sorrowing parents, for alas! those years were spent in the pursuit of unhallowed pleasure—in the haunts of folly and vice. It was from scenes like these, he was called into active service; and in the field of battle he received in his bosom the fatal ball “commissioned to destroy.” His final moments were few;

his mortal conflict with his last most potent foe was short and decisive : alas ! no parent, no friend was nigh to administer to the wants of expiring nature. Whatever might have been the state of his mind at this solemn moment, there was no friendly breath to enter into his sympathies, no one to direct his dying eyes to Calvary's cross. His body was found after the battle, and, with his comrades who had fallen around him, shared one common grave. The sad news was conveyed to his wife and mother. The former had been for some time in ill health, and did not long survive this overwhelming stroke. The children were consequently left almost altogether friendless and destitute. They were removed to the parish, but the tender-hearted grandmother pressed the orphans to her bosom, and putting up a prayer for the protection and blessing of that divine Being who hath promised to be a father to the fatherless, resolved to share with them her frugal and often scanty meal.

Not many months before this afflicting event, she had followed to the grave the remains of the husband of her youth, and also of a daughter, who had given promise of no small excel-

lence, and whom she hoped would have been the solace of her declining years. She had seen this dear child sinking gradually into the tomb. A wasting decline withered the rose from her cheek—the bloom of youth gave way to a death-like paleness. Her light and agile step became slow and feeble, and her vigorous frame weak and imbecile as that of the helpless infant. Mrs. Neville attended the sick bed of her darling child, with all a mother's anxious solicitude—she closed those eyes upon which she had been wont to gaze with fondness, such as only mothers feel—she resigned her treasure into the arms of everlasting love, and this was the language of her pious resignation, “The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away : blessed be the name of the Lord.” Her husband had been afflicted for several years, and soon after the death of his daughter, it was the will of heaven that he should be released. Thus was she called upon to give up another object of her love. They had lived happily together, his industry and her carefulness having kept them above want. Their station was humble, but by their conduct they made it respectable.

Mrs. Neville mourned her bereavement, but she did not then mourn with the bitterness of those who have no hope : her husband and her child had died in the faith ; and though the trial was severe, she knew that her loss was great gain to them ; and through the faith of Christianity she could look with holy confidence to a re-union with them in another and a better world. “ I shall,” she said, “ go to them, but they will not return to me.”

Not such, however, were her feelings when the intelligence of her son’s death met her distracted ear, coming, as it did, with such poignant severity. For a time she sunk beneath the stroke—no tear fell to relieve the burning anguish. She looked upon the fatherless babes, deprived also of a mother’s care, and her heart was wrung for a while with a deep and exquisite agony. It was not the loss of her son, nor the destitute state of the children which occasioned this overwhelming distress, she knew that God had promised protection to the widow and the orphan, and she relied upon his word : but that her son should so die, cut off, she feared, in his sins, and so sent to his account—this, this was fearful to her soul.

At length, through the mercy of him who, though for wise purposes he sendeth grief, “yet still hath compassion,” and will not crush the bruised reed, she was enabled to turn for consolation to the sacred Book. She searched the Scriptures—she read the divine promises with attentive heart—she believed and was comforted. “When thou passeth through the waters I will be with thee, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee: for I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour.” She was now, indeed, passing through the waters of affliction; she had to buffet the strong waves of adversity; but He whose command can hush the angry billows, did, in the sweet but powerful accents of his word, speak peace to her soul. Like the three Hebrew youths whom the tyranny of a despotic king had consigned to a fiery furnace, heated seven times hotter than it was wont, she found in this, her fiery trial, that the Son of God was with her. His presence comforted and supported her; the divine promise was realized—“My grace is sufficient for thee; as

thy day is, so shall thy strength be." These, with many other passages in the holy and blessed Word, poured forth their healing virtue. The balm was infused into her inmost soul. She felt its power; she no longer drooped in despondency, but, resigned to the will of heaven, commenced the active discharge of the important duties she had undertaken to perform.

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CHAPTER III.

“By degrees

The human blossom blows; and every day
Soft as it rolls along, shows some new charm.
Then infant reason grows apace, and calls
For the kind hand of an assiduous care.”

Thomson.

WE must, for the sake of connexion, retrace our steps, and carry our readers back to the period when Mrs. Neville received her grandchildren. She was not then an inhabitant of the lodge; but resided in a cottage at a little village near the domain we have alluded to. In the mean time, she provided for her own wants, and those of the little ones, by taking in clothes to wash, and by doing needlework: in short, by any little piece of industry by which she could procure the supply necessary for their support. Her grandchildren Elizabeth and Margaret Neville, were very young, and, of course, unable to yield her any assistance: Elizabeth was only seven, and Margaret six years of age. They shed many tears for

the loss of their parents, but the kindness of their grandmother soon dried them up; and when they beheld her tears flow, and heard her exclaim, "My son! my son! would to God I had died for thee," they would cling around her, and climbing her knees, clasp their little arms about her neck, and bid her not cry any more, for they would be good children, and always love and obey her. The sorrows of youth are evanescent; the buoyancy of their spirits soon enables them to soar above their grief; it is but like the cloud in a summer's morn, which the brilliancy of the sun soon chases from the horizon.

"No sense have they of ills to come—
No cares beyond to-day."

The good woman loved to see them happy; and while they gambolled upon the green, or in sportive festivity dressed themselves with daisies and wild-flowers, she inwardly blessed the God of her mercies, who had spared these little ones to comfort her declining years. She taught them to know their "Creator in the days of their youth," and obliged them by her example, as well as by her precepts, to bend the

knee in humble prayer before his throne. They were the best behaved little girls in the village ; and you might see, by their quiet and orderly behaviour in the house of God, that they were taught to venerate the Sabbath.

Mrs. Neville was very anxious to have them instructed in reading, but alas ! she could not spare the requisite expense from her scanty earnings ; for not being of a strong constitution, she could not do so much work as many other persons, and when she received her little pittance, it was but just sufficient for the supply of their bodily wants. She sighed when she passed the village school, and heard the hum of youthful voices, and beheld the dame seated in the midst of her little groupe, all busily engaged in conning their tasks. Her own education had been very scanty : when she was a child, the blessings of education were not at all known or participated in by the poor ; even the middling classes possessed them in a very limited degree. She would not have been able to read at all, but for her great estimation of the sacred book ; but her desire to become acquainted with this rich treasure of divine truth, enabled

her to overcome the difficulties of almost unassisted study, and through diligence and perseverance, she could now read, with tolerable correctness, the history of her Saviour's love, therein recorded. Her knowledge was very limited, but it was important; she knew, and knew "no more, her Bible true." This summed up her stock of literary information, and this she endeavoured to impart to her dear orphan charge; but the work of instruction went on slowly: the week days were necessarily devoted to labour, and her fellow cottagers were nearly as much occupied as herself, and were, for the most part, still less fitted to undertake the task of instruction, even had they been so disposed.

One day having occasion to send some trifling articles of linen to the house of Mr. Stanley, the clergyman, she put them up neatly in a small basket, and sent her grandchildren with it, and bid them give it in with her humble duty. When they arrived, the basket was taken from them by the servant, and they were informed that Mr. Stanley wished to see them in the parlour. The little girls entered the room with their best curtsies. Mr. Stanley, who had a

book in his hand, called them to him, and, presenting it the eldest, inquired if she could read. She said they could both spell easy words, as their grandmother taught them on the Sabbath evening. He observed, that he was very much pleased to hear it; and now he was going to open a school, and, with the assistance of some young friends of his own, would teach them and all the little boys and girls in the village, so that, when they grew up to be men and women, they might be able to read the Bible, and there learn for themselves what Jesus Christ had done and suffered for their salvation. He then gave each of them a little fruit and a cake—commended their behaviour at church—bid them continue to be good children, and obey their kind grandmother, and with this affectionate admonition dismissed them.

The poor little things scarcely knew how to contain their joy, they were so delighted with the kindness their good pastor had shown them, and his promise that they should attend his school. Running home with all the speed they could, almost breathless with haste, their countenances glowing with health, and their eyes

sparkling with ecstasy, they began their communication, which their eagerness made almost unintelligible. Both speaking at once, it was some time before the good woman could comprehend the matter ; and, when she did, her joy made her doubt the correctness of the information. She sought the presence of her pastor, to learn whether the news was not too good to be believed ; and when its truth was confirmed to her, and she was told that her little orphans would be taught to read, and be instructed likewise in the best things, she heartily thanked God, and her benefactors, for such a merciful interposition in favour of the poor. Most gladly did she engage to send them regularly neat and clean upon the Sabbath, and see that their lessons were attended to during the week.

Mrs. Neville's anxious wish was now granted : the dear children would now be enabled to peruse the word of God, and when her sight should fail, they would be able to read to her some of those great and precious promises which had hitherto been her encouragement and support.

The following Sunday, Elizabeth and Margaret were up at an early hour : their faces were washed, and their hair nicely combed ; indeed they were at all times cleanly and neat, but so anxious were they on this important occasion, that they were fearful lest a spot should soil their clothes, or their hands should not be sufficiently clean. Their eagerness and joy would scarcely allow them to eat their morning's meal, which they could not help thinking unusually long in its preparation ; but their good grandmother had taken care that there should be sufficient time for all that was necessary, and there was one thing, it is to be feared few take into their account, which she deemed the most essential : " In all thy ways," says the Psalmist, " acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths." This duty she had not forgotten, nor left it to be performed at the last moment ; but this was a season that called for peculiar gratitude. Mrs. Neville knew from whom "every good and every perfect gift cometh," and she rightly felt that the gift of instruction to her poor fatherless children, was a good gift, and well merited her sincere and heartfelt thanks : and, accordingly, when the breakfast things had

been put aside, and all was decent and in order, she took a hand of each, and kneeling down, blessed God for this fresh display of his mercy, and prayed that his blessing might rest upon the benefactors he had raised up, and that their Christian exertions for the good of others, might through his grace be successful, and also benefit their own souls.

This act of devotion over, with a mind serene and thankful, filled with that "peace which passeth all understanding," Mrs. Neville set out with little Elizabeth and Margaret for the school. They were received with kindness, and the young folks soon provided with books, and appointed to a class. The good woman left them with much pleasure, and returned home to prepare for the public services of the house of God. She ever hailed the return of this day; it was to her truly a Sabbath of rest, but not of sloth, though nothing of a worldly nature was suffered to intrude. She could have said with the poet, had she known the poet's words; but at least her heart felt their import.

“Dear is the hallowed morn to me,
When village bells awake the day;
And, by their sacred minstrelsy,
Call me from earthly cares away.

And dear to me the winged hour,
Spent in thy earthly courts, O Lord :
To feel devotion’s soothing power,
And catch the manna of thy word.

Yes! dear to me the hallowed morn,
The village bells, the shepherd’s voice;
These oft have found my heart forlorn,
And always bid that heart rejoice.”

CHAPTER IV.

"Truth is not local, God alike pervades,
 And fills the world of traffic, and the shades,
 And may be fear'd amidst the busiest scenes,
 Or scorn'd where business never intervenes."

Cowper.

THERE had lately become resident in the village, a family, who soon showed, by their compassion for the poor, and their constant efforts to alleviate distress, that they were followers of Him who went about doing good. Mrs. Lawrence had tasted the cup of sorrow. She had followed to his last long home the husband of her youth, the friend and companion of her maturer years ; and now, with her amiable son and daughter, she bade farewell to the bustle and gaieties of the great city, and retired to the quiet seclusion of village life. Indeed she had a particular inducement to do so, as Mr. Stanley had been the intimate acquaintance and friend of her husband, even from their boyish days. They had spent their early, happy years in the society of each other ; they had studied under

the same masters ; their tastes and inclinations were similar ; but their pursuits in life were destined to differ. Mr. Stanley was placed, in accordance with his wishes, in the church : Mr. Lawrence joined his father in an extensive mercantile business. Thus separated, the friends had little opportunity of personal intercourse ; but a correspondence had always been carried on, and occasional visits paid. After some years, passed by the one in the quiet retirement of the country, in the exercise of his important, though unostentatious clerical duties, the other in the bustle of metropolitan commerce, that hour drew on which was to cause a final separation from the interests, friendships, and dearest pursuits of this life. Mr. Stanley obeyed the summons of his friend ; he calmed the agitation of his spirits ; he directed his views above this earthly scene ; he “allured to brighter worlds, and led the way ;” he encouraged his hopes—for well he knew that those hopes had long been fixed upon the sure Foundation laid in Zion ; the immoveable rock of the Saviour’s atonement and merits. Mr. Lawrence was not ashamed to be called a disciple. His principles were sound, and his profession good. His

business obliged him to mix much in society, of which his gentlemanly address, his cheerful and easy manners, rendered him at once the ornament and delight—his lively wit, his playful fancy sparkled with all the brilliancy of genius, while its radiance was tempered by the mild serenity of religion. Vice shrunk abashed at his approach, and the infidel was glad to conceal his opinions, if brought into contact,

“And felt how awful goodness is, and saw
Virtue in her own shape how lovely.”

Such was Mr. Lawrence, and his amiable family were worthy of him ; but of them we shall have occasion to speak afterwards. Mr. Lawrence was a benefactor of the human race ; every thing that was great and good received his sanction and support. He never cramped his noble mind with party prejudice ; but met, on the broad basis of Christianity, good men of whatever sect or party. To all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth, he would give a brother's hand—a brother's aid.

After the death of Mr. Lawrence, Mr. Stanley assisted the widowed mourner in the settle-

ment of her concerns. These were not intricate, so far as good management and regularity were concerned. It had been Mr. Lawrence's wish to educate his son for the church; and he had accordingly directed his views that way. This he had imparted to Mr. Stanley; and that good man now prepared to fulfil the wishes of his friend.

Every thing being settled with regard to the property in hand, and arrangements made, relative to what was yet to be received, Mrs. Lawrence left London with her son and daughter, and took up her abode in the village, where Mr. Stanley exercised his pastoral charge. Mrs. Stanley received her with kind and sisterly affection: to the young people she was a second mother. William soon took up his residence with his father's friend, as Mr. Stanley thought he would better pursue his studies under his constant superintending care.

These were the young friends Mr. Stanley alluded to, as about to join him in his work and labour of love. Ellenor Lawrence was younger than her brother; the one was fourteen, the other sixteen years of age. Ellenor was elegant in person, and amiable in disposition;

and trained, as she had been, under the eye of her excellent and accomplished mother, and a pious young female who superintended her education, and was unceasing in her attentions, she would have been inexcusable had she failed to improve by their instructions. As her mind expanded, it was stored with useful knowledge ; she was taught all that was befitting her sex and station ; and her improvement in her various studies gave great promise of future excellence. Mr. Lawrence had placed his son at a public school, from whence he was removed to receive the blessing of his dying parent. Mr. Stanley's offer of superintending the education of William, had given great satisfaction and consolation to the mind of Mr. Lawrence ; and he left his beloved wife and children to the charge of this dear friend, who kindly undertook the management of their pecuniary concerns, until William should become of age.

Mrs. Lawrence had now resided in the village about six months, when this benevolent plan was formed, which met her most decided approbation ; and assistance from the whole family was readily promised. Mrs. Lawrence felt a melancholy gratification in believing, that

the measure would have been highly congenial to the beneficent feelings of him who was now no more. She knew that his enlightened mind, and sound judgment, had ever deemed the instruction, and consequent moral improvement of the poor, a concern of the highest political, as well as religious importance. He patronized and forwarded, to the extent of his power, institutions which were formed for the purposes of instruction. These were spreading with rapidity in the metropolis, and in the large towns and cities in the country ; but many a village and hamlet still remained in a state of the grossest mental darkness.

It was not because Mr. Stanley had no inclination to benefit the poor, or that he thought lightly of the blessings of education ; but himself had not long been a resident in the parish. Particular circumstances had led to an exchange of livings ; and he was compelled to leave the people of his charge, and take the oversight of a flock, to whom he was a stranger. He soon discovered the almost total want of religious feeling amongst them ; they had scarcely an intelligible idea of the principles of Christianity. The hours, which were not given to labour, or

to repose, were devoted to pursuits which were inimical to thought, and would indeed, had they been disposed to think, have entirely precluded reflection. The Sabbath was unhallowed ; some of them, it is true, attended the service of the church ; but more, many more passed the hour of divine worship, sauntering without its walls, or lounging lazily in their cottages—untidy, dirty, and unfit to present themselves to public view, their minds bore no impression but of the present moment. Their children were more like a set of little savages, than creatures possessing any thing of the civilization of a Christian state ; they seemed to be human only in form, for their minds were utterly brutalized and debased. The village green, spread out in all its verdure and loveliness, presented a scene sweetly picturesque and delightful ; but the gross habits, the vicious sports, and noisy pastime of the uncultivated villagers, changed its beauteous aspect, and spoiled even nature's works. The church was situated close to the spot where these revellers were wont to assemble ; and, as there was seldom divine service more than once on the Sabbath, the clergyman having to do duty in two parishes, it was not

unfrequent for the sanctity of the grave to be disturbed, and turned to shame, by those footsteps of impiety.

Thus hopeless was the scene presented to the view of the good Mr. Stanley. He surveyed the moral waste ; and, at once, with a mind duly impressed with the importance of his duties, set about its culture. He devoted himself exclusively to the spiritual concerns of the people of his own parish ; and though his income was lessened in consequence, yet his satisfaction was increased by the prospect of success. He visited each family, and, as far as he could, relieved their wants ; whether those wants had been brought on them by sickness or misfortune, or old age. He admonished, encouraged, or gently reproved,—and, by a strict attention to his duties, being “instant in season and out of season,” he gained a hold upon their affections, and established a sort of control over their conduct. By degrees the church was filled, the Sunday sports neglected, and the village green deserted ; the Bible and religious tracts gained an entrance into the houses, and displaced the vile ballads, and vulgar pictures which

had formerly disgraced the walls. But though the outward appearance of things was thus improved, much yet remained to be done. A love for the holy book had been implanted ; but, alas ! not one in ten could *read* its sacred pages. The prince of darkness had so long blinded the minds of the poor untaught people, that few among them either knew or cared for aught beyond the present hour. The small number who did so were branded with every 'opprobrious epithet which malice could devise, or ignorance bestow : among these few was our poor widow, to whom we shall now return with pleasure.

The careless and partial instruction, which had been delivered from the pulpit of the parish church, occasioned her, with a few others, to seek the genuine truths of the word in a neighbouring town, where the gospel was faithfully dispensed ; but when Mr. Stanley took up his residence in the village, she soon perceived that there no longer existed a necessity for her wandering from home—the glad tidings of salvation being brought to her very door. With gratitude to the pastor who had so long dealt to her the word of Life,

and who had been a faithful ambassador of Christ, she took leave of her fellow-christians in that place, and fixed herself under the ministry of Mr. Stanley. Her orderly and regular conduct and attendance, the quiet behaviour of the children, and the neatness with which they and herself were always attired, soon caught his attention. He called at her cottage ; and how very different was the scene it exhibited, from what he so often witnessed in his domiciliary visits to many of her neighbours ! no noisy vulgarity, no comfortless squalid appearances. Though it was evidently the abode of poverty, yet peace was its inmate ; even “ that sweet peace which goodness bosoms ever.”

The good man soon won from her the tale of her distresses ; and while he addressed her in the language of holy consolation and comfort, her christian heart beat responsive—for well did she know the source from whence he drew. On his way home, thinking of the good widow, and her neat little grandchildren, his eyes were attracted by the village youth, now assembled at their evening

sports : and while he felt that the religious services of the pulpit were not sufficient for this growing population, their wants touched his heart ; and, as far as he could, he determined to afford a supply. The parish, which had formerly been indebted to his pious labours, had long before formed a Sunday School, which was doing much good ; and he resolved, though he should begin without either finances or books, (except what he could himself furnish,) that he would delay no longer : and, though its operations should necessarily be upon a small scale, at the beginning, he had no doubt but it would be accompanied with “ that blessing which maketh rich.”

Thus was the plan formed, which was to give a new tone to the energies of so many intellectual and responsible beings, who were perishing for lack of knowledge.

CHAPTER V.

“Without fair culture’s kind parental aid,
 Without enlivening suns and genial show’rs,
 And shelter from the blast, in vain we hope
 The tender plant should rear its blooming head,
 Or yield the harvest promised in its spring.”

Akenside.

THE Sabbath morning on which the school was to open, was hailed with scarcely less enthusiasm by the young teachers, than that which swelled the hearts of some of the children. Novelty might, and no doubt had its influence with both; and it remained for time to show whether, when this first gloss was worn off, the inclination for doing and receiving good would remain. Mr. Stanley had formed some simple and excellent rules, according to which the children were classed, and placed under the superintendence of their appointed teachers: all who could do any thing to aid in this good cause were set to the work. The children had been unused to confinement; and

it was no small task so to engage their attention, and concentrate their thoughts, as to fix them upon any one object, for a sufficient length of time, to effect the desired purpose : but a little judicious management soon overcame the difficulty, tamed the wildness of their spirits, and led them to feel a pleasure in learning they had not anticipated, and consequently they became quiet, orderly, and persevering.

After the lapse of a few weeks, as the children became more familiar with their duties, and knew what, on their part, was expected by their teachers, the business of tuition went on with great regularity, and their improvement became conspicuous.—The little Nevilles were so fortunate as to be placed in the class of which Miss Lawrence was the teacher, and soon awoke an interest in her kind and benevolent heart. Mrs. Lawrence, accompanied by her daughter, went to call on their grandmother, and was pleased, in no small degree, with the piety, resignation, and good sense which the poor woman displayed. She too was a widow. Alas ! there is something even in the sound of the word to which the imagination attaches the idea of loneliness and sorrow ! and all too

deeply did Mrs. Lawrence feel this sympathy ; for “ from her own, she learned to melt at other’s woe.”

While Mrs. Lawrence and Mrs. Neville were conversing in the cottage, Ellenor and her pupils walked in the neat little garden before the door. This was a small plot of ground which, with some persons, would have served only for a pathway up to the house ; but the hand of neatness and industry had bedecked it with flowers, simple and common indeed, but beautiful. Mrs. Neville had taught Elizabeth and Margaret how to clear them of weeds : a kind neighbour who understood the art of gardening, now and then put into the earth a fresh plant, and at the proper season, cut and trimmed the woodbine, and trained its luxuriant foliage around the lattice, and the door-way, within which a seat was placed. And here the good dame was wont to enjoy the calm serenity of a summer’s eve ; and while she repaired the rents which time had made in their apparel, or turned her spinning wheel, the little ones studied their lessons for the ensuing Sabbath.

The children were delighted with the sweetness and affability of their teacher ; they knew

little indeed of the forms of society—of its artificial, but necessary distinctions, yet they felt that the visit of Mrs. and Miss Lawrence was an act of kindness and condescension. They knew them to be their benefactors ; and though their natural bashfulness and timidity soon wore off, yet they still retained a proper feeling of respect. After showing Miss Lawrence all their pretty flowers, they ran for their books, and repeated to her what they had learned of their Sabbath lessons. While they were thus delightfully amusing themselves, the conference between Mrs. Lawrence and the worthy inmate of the cottage ended ; and that lady took her leave. After this, the situation of Mrs. Neville was sensibly improved : Mrs. Lawrence often furnished her with employment of a lighter kind than she had been accustomed to. And when she was assailed by illness, which was not unfrequent, she would send her all those little delicacies and comforts so necessary for her state ; and, as Elizabeth and Margaret grew up, she would employ them in her own house, in light and easy tasks, suited to their age—thus fitting them for filling well future situations of usefulness.

William Lawrence was steadily and assiduously pursuing his studies, under the superintendence of Mr. Stanley. That gentleman, finding it necessary to visit London, in consequence of his trust as executor, under the will of Mr. Lawrence, determined to take William along with him ; and, when he should have arranged the affairs which carried him thither, to extend his journey, in order to afford his young friend the advantage of seeing some of the beauties of his native land, as well as giving him a little insight into the habits of society. This proposal was, of course, too agreeable not to be readily and cheerfully agreed to ; and, after bidding farewell to his beloved friends, William with his guardian and instructor, set off in high spirits, on their proposed tour. He promised his sister, when they parted, that he would write her some account of the places he should visit ; this he did in a way that was pleasing and interesting to the dear circle at home, who rejoiced in his happiness. But as a detail of cities, and public buildings would be foreign to the objects of this little history, we shall pass over these, and merely transcribe one letter, in which, after giving a glowing

description of the natural advantages of the place, he investigates the moral condition of the inhabitants.

“MY DEAREST SISTER,

“My last letter was filled with an account of the public buildings I had visited—the noble and stupendous works of man. You have a taste for the arts, and love to read descriptions of ‘solemn temples,’ of ‘lofty minarets,’ of the great and the magnificent; but I know you will not the less delight to wander with me in that sweet vale, which, like the famed Parnasian hill, has given inspiration to the Muse. Come then, and

—‘Let us trace the matchless vale of Thames,
To Clermont’s terraced height, and Esher’s groves,
Where, in the sweetest solitude, embraced
By the soft windings of the silent Mole,
From courts and senates greatness found repose.’

“The sweetness and loveliness of the scenery in every direction; the beauty and verdure of its romantic hills and dales, cannot but enchant the fancy, and delight the soul. They are well fitted to inspire poetic feeling; and though I have no pretensions to this fascinating

art, I cannot view such scenery with indifference, and you must pardon the enthusiasm it has inspired.

“The little hamlet to which I am going to direct your attention, is situated just in the centre of all that is lovely in nature. It is near to Clermont, the late residence of the lamented Princess Charlotte, far removed from the noise and bustle of commercial, and fashionable life : its inhabitants are simple peasants, and without looking minutely into their moral condition, we might suppose, that as they were far removed from the pestilential wickedness of towns and cities, possessing innocence and peace, they would be blest with a sort of Arcadian felicity. Alas ! my dear sister, this is but the vision of a warm fancy—the dream of a romantic moment, which you and I have already proved fallacious ; for we know by observation, in our own village, that vice, like a rank and unseemly weed, grows most luxuriantly in the mind that is ignorant and uncultivated. But to return to my subject, here is presented to the view, the finest picture of rural life ; and while the eye rests upon the surrounding beauties, or from some eminence, explores some distant prospect,

imagination takes her rapid flight, and, leaving nature, soars as upon an angel's wing, to worlds unknown—beholds, with the eye of faith, those blooming fields, and more unclouded skies, where the God of nature and of grace pours forth the effulgence of his glory, and sheds light and love, and happiness around.

“The heart of the Christian is animated with holy joy, as he contemplates the wonders of creation ; and he is led to look ‘through nature, up to nature’s God.’ But, alas ! the inhabitants of this lovely village, but a short time since, might have been said only to bear the *name* of Christians, in common with their race ; the term was incorrect, as applied to them, for they knew not God. They beheld the sun arise and illumine, with his rays, their beauteous hills, and shed down his stream of radiance into their valleys—but they beheld him without Christian gratitude, and without religious praise : of the hand that formed him—of the power that spake him into existence they were ignorant or unmindful. Amidst all that could charm the eye of taste, or fascinate the mind, or delight the heart, yet was this village in a moral point of view, situated in a dreary waste.

'The Sun of Righteousness shone not' above its horizon ; the rose of Sharon bloomed not in its vales ; the people were in a state of the most dreary mental darkness : children and adults, alike illiterate and untaught, lived in the grossest ignorance and died 'without hope.'

" The parish church being situated at a considerable distance from the dwellings of the villagers, (nearly two miles,) if the sound of the Sabbath-bell was ever wafted upon the breeze, it passed unheeded, and unhailed. The sacred day was profaned by unhallowed amusements, and vice and profligacy held a triumphant reign. The hard-earned wages of the peasantry were spent in the public-house—the little tavern of the place ; and there did they drown the reproaches of conscience and the convictions of reason. There was that holy name, at which seraphs tremble and adore, lightly blasphemed, and used, alas ! but to give a more horrid emphasis to the drunkard's muttered curse. In fact, the strongest language that could have been employed would have served but faintly to delineate the degraded state of these cottagers ; ignorant of even the first rudiments of human learning ; ignorant of them-

selves as sinners, and of the way of salvation by a Redeemer, they were willing slaves of sin, and led captive by Satan at his will.

“In this enlightened land, such ignorance might have been deemed incredible, did not our own experience convince us of its truth. Alas! it is too certain that, in a religious regard, many of the spots where nature has been lavish of her loveliest bounties are but ‘dark places of the earth.’ The account I have here given, we received from the lips of one deeply interested in the important—the delightful change which has been made; for happily this night of mental gloom is fast receding before the glorious light of the Gospel. The zealous though humble efforts of a Sabbath School teacher have produced the best effects. The formation of a Sunday School has led to the introduction of a preached Gospel, and thus both old and young are instructed to look unto Jesus; bad habits are fast giving way; and, instead of thronging to the ale-house, these very people are now pressing forward to hear the word of God. They now know themselves to be creatures who are destined for immortality, and many of them are inquiring what they ‘must do to be

saved.' What a different scene does the Sabbath now present to the admiring eye of the Christian. The youth are seen hastening with delighted hearts, and willing feet, to meet their instructor, that they may learn from him those lessons of divine wisdom which are fitted to direct their steps along the path of life. The time allotted for school instruction being over, the bell is sounded, and the villagers assemble to hear the word of God. The neat and simple edifice, erected by the bounty of the benevolent for this twofold purpose, is filled ; and those persons whose feet had never stood within the sanctuary, and to whom the worship of the living God was altogether as much unknown as it would have been in the days of their forefathers, who were formerly heard in loud vociferation imprecating curses, and calling down the divine vengeance upon their heads, are now weekly imploring blessings, or chanting in 'rustic harmony' the praises of their Redeemer.

"O how animating was the scene we witnessed ! Mr. Stanley kindly accompanied me to visit the school, and afterwards attended divine worship in the same place. The service was

performed by one of the neighbouring ministers. The solemnity of his address, and the fervency of his prayers, seemed to penetrate my very heart; surely thought I, ‘God is verily in this place.’ To add to the interest of this scene, soon after the service began, a company of gipsies entered, and took the seats to which they were directed, with the utmost quietness and decorum; excepting one, a very aged woman, who stood in the door-way, though as divine service proceeded, getting more and more interested, she stepped a little further and further by degrees, till she was entirely within the building. The movements of this woman caught my eye, without in any way lessening the effects of the preacher’s discourse; for I could not but observe with delight the interest with which she listened to subjects so important, and whose importance I saw, as it were, reflected in her countenance, but of which she and her companions evidently never heard before. This, it is probable, was the first time they had ever bowed the knee before the throne of the Eternal, or sought for mercy and salvation through the only way in which these are to be obtained. Several of the elders of this family

were advancing rapidly towards the end of their mortal pilgrimage : though still hale and robust, the frost of age had silvered their locks, and their dark eyes had lost much of their youthful fire. I was greatly astonished at the sight of these roving plunderers ; and my astonishment was not lessened to find them sit with so much stillness and decorum ; their bronzed countenances lighted up with a sort of reverential awe, as if they were conscious they were in the presence of some spiritual intelligence, who was taking cognizance of their conduct : and this, you know, though really the case, must, from their state of ignorance, have been an idea never before impressed with any sort of clearness upon their minds : it now appeared to come over their spirits with all its certainty and importance, and they seemed individually to feel, ‘Thou, God, seest me.’

“After the devotional duties were over, these people retired in the same orderly and quiet way in which they had entered. The phenomenon of their appearance was then accounted for. The Sabbath School teacher, whose residence is at the distance of six miles from this place, coming from thence at an early

hour in the morning, saw the tent of these gipsies pitched but a little way out of the path he must necessarily take. He could not pass unobserved. He knew they were a roving set of plunderers, who, in many cases, paid as little respect to life as to property; but his bosom was glowing with Christian philanthropy; he ‘feared God, and knew no other fear.’ His resolution was quickly formed. Low and degraded as were these wretched beings in the scale of humanity, yet did they possess one common nature with himself; he felt the tie of brotherhood—he pitied their state of ignorance, destitution and misery; and he determined not to pass them by without offering the only effectual means of relief.

“The inmates of the tent were soon aware of his approach; and while the men turned the scowl of their shaggy eye-brows upon him, some of the children came running forwards, without a single article of clothing upon them, and, with their usual importunity and clamour, made their demand upon his purse. He spoke to them kindly, told them that he was going to their tent. They did not at first believe him, and continued their vociferation; but perceiv-

ing that he actually bent his steps that way, they, with no little astonishment, ran on before to apprize the other persons, who now thronged together, presenting, along with the children, a most extraordinary looking groupe.—‘ These houseless rovers of the sylvan world ’ composed one family, and that of three generations : in all about twelve persons.

“ Mr. Spencer has a happy tact of introducing the most important subjects with perfect ease and facility, and without suffering them to lose aught of their high worth and dignity ; he yet contrives so to clothe his expressions as to meet the understanding of the parties to whom he addresses himself. He spoke to them of God—of themselves—of heaven and of hell. He told them of the sacred obligation of the Sabbath—its importance—its worship. He dwelt upon the love of God to mankind—spoke of their immortal destinies—offered to instruct their children, if they would allow them to attend his instructions—and invited all of them to participate with himself in the sacred services of the day in the house of God. He said they would hear the bell sounded when the hour ar-

rived for public worship, and would take care to accommodate them with seats.

“ These lawless wanderers—outcasts of civil society—whom we are accustomed to believe neither fear God nor regard man, did not hear him without emotion. Unaccustomed to the voice of kindness and sympathy, their ferocious manners became less rude as he proceeded, till at last the savage melted into man. They treated him with great deference: sent the naked children into the tent, from which they again emerged with their tattered garments thrown around them, keeping however at a respectful distance. The elder persons soon became communicative, and expressed their willingness to receive instruction; promised to attend public worship that very day, and that he should see them behave with propriety and decorum.

“ The aged female expressed herself in a most peculiar manner. There was a sort of enthusiasm of nature—a something like mind shining through the mists of ignorance. ‘ I will come,’ said she, ‘ as far as the door, but I cannot enter. My head shall have no covering but the blue sky until I die; it is forty years

since it was under a roof, and if I was to go into a house I could not breathe. No! there shall no roof ever cover me.' This was the woman who attracted so much of my attention. The teacher said, she seemed to entertain a strange and undefined feeling of dread, lest she should be obliged to give up her free wanderings for the restraints of civil life. 'I could not breathe if I were not in the open air. I must see the green grass grow. I should die if a roof covered me.' This she repeated several times, and when she engaged to come to the school-house, and to join in public worship, she hoped to be excused entering: 'she would stand at the door,' she said, 'for she must feel the wind blow upon her face.' Accustomed to a life of hardship, her frame was inured to the summer's heat and winter's cold; she knew not, she wished not for the comforts and the blessings of *home*; that little word, so full of charm, possessed no attraction for her, such is the force of habit. Yet this uncultivated being certainly possessed mind, and taste—for was she not a votary of Nature? What might she not have been, had education polished the gem.

“Who can tell what important results may arise from the events of this day, in this little obscure hamlet ! Even the angels may have had their attention drawn thither. There is no respect of persons with God : in his presence the prince and the peasant stand upon a level : if he has prepared the heart of one of these untutored wanderers to receive the seed of divine grace, he will cause it to take root ; it shall not languish and die, but refreshed with heavenly dews it will rise up, blossom and bear fruit to his glory, till it be finally transplanted to bloom for ever in luxuriance and beauty in the paradise of God.

“As we returned, after passing a most delightful day, the moon was shedding her silver rays upon our path, and gilding with her sweet pale lustre every shrub and tree. No sound save the clattering of the horses’ hoofs broke upon the stillness ; we rode on in silence, for our minds were too much occupied to admit of conversation.

“How vastly important, my dear sister, is education—above all, religious education ! What mistaken views do those persons entertain of human nature who talk of its innate dig-

nity, in its present degraded and fallen state ! Possessing faculties capable of high things it is true, but blindly perverting them to their own destruction. The nature of man, when first it came from the forming hand of his Creator, was indeed noble and dignified, and bore upon it the impress of divinity : but, alas ! as soon as ‘ the crown of innocence ’ fell from his head, and he sinned against his Maker, he lost all that was excellent and divine ; and it is not until the image of God has, through the regenerating influence of the Holy Spirit, been re-stamped upon his soul, that he can regain any, even the least portion, of his lost dignity, or direct aright the powers and faculties of his immortal mind.

“ But it is time I brought this long letter to a conclusion. Mr. Stanley writes home by this post, and will give all the information respecting our route, and when you may expect to welcome us back again. In the meantime, salute our dear mother for me, and present my kind love and duty to my dear Mrs. Stanley. I remain,

“ My beloved Ellenor,

“ Ever your affectionate Brother,

“ WILLIAM LAWRENCE.”

William's letters afforded the beloved circle at home great delight. The minuteness with which he detailed whatever interested his feelings, or called forth his attention, gave them, in their eyes, a charm superior to the most studied elegance of composition. Mrs. Lawrence felt a mother's hopes centre in her boy ; to his protection she trusted to confide her darling Ellenor, should it be the will of Providence to remove her from them ; and her soul glowed with gratitude to that God who had bestowed the blessing, and to whose service he was dedicated. Like Hannah, her desire was, that " he should be the Lord's."

CHAPTER VI.

“Hear, Lord, the song of praise and pray’r;
 In Heaven thy dwelling place,
 From infants made the public care,
 And taught to seek thy face.”

Cowper.

IN the quiet retirement of the country, few incidents of a public nature of much interest occur ; but life is made up of little events, and the daily and hourly recurrence of these, perpetually present something either to cheer or to distress—either to exercise fortitude and patience, or to console and comfort. The school continued to flourish, teachers and assistants were not wanting. Other schools were formed in the adjoining parishes, and the country around received the benefit. Thus did the little seed take root, spring up, and flourish, and shoot forth its branches, till it became like the cedar of Lebanon for beauty.

William Lawrence was now about to enter upon his university studies, preparatory to his

final appointment to the Christian ministry. Ellenor, who was grown a fine young woman, lovely in her person, and still more lovely in her mind, engaged the affections of a gentleman, whose addresses were highly approved by Mr. Stanley, and sanctioned by her mother. Every circumstance appeared auspicious. The thought of separation alone was painful ; the maternal heart cannot divest itself of serious and anxious solicitude at the thought of parting from a darling child.

Mrs. Lawrence endeavoured to reconcile her mind to this event, by the assurance, that the temporal happiness of her daughter would be promoted by her union with this gentleman ; and, what was of incalculably greater importance, he was fitted, not only to be a guardian and protector along the path of life, but a fellow-traveller towards Zion—a guide and director in her spiritual course. How blest the tie that unites such minds ! Lovers of God, disciples of the Redeemer ; to them the intercourse, and the charities of life, are not only endeared, but sanctified. They bend the knee in adoration to the same Lord ; they own one Master, even Christ ; they hold sweet converse about

those mighty events that were accomplished at Jerusalem ; and they look forward to that period, when, through the atonement and merits of their Saviour, even though death-divided, they part not for ever ; they shall meet before his throne to spend an eternity of happiness—such as “eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive.”

But, ah me ! how sad is the reverse ! how dire the lot of those who rush with heedlessness into the fatal snares of the deceiver of souls—who, though themselves lovers of God, can yet, regardless of their own eternal hopes, form a bond of alliance with his enemies, and thus court the danger of being drawn aside from the path of holiness : and though infinite mercy, and almighty grace, may prevent such apostacy, yet is happiness to them a stranger, and they go mourning all their days. They turn the eye of compassion upon the object of their fondest love ; and, alas ! the fervent prayer of faith is either silenced by despondency, or the agonized heart groans out its bitter pleading, or heaves the sigh of unutterable sorrow.

Mrs. Neville began to sink beneath the pressure of years and infirmity. Elizabeth was taken into the house of Mr. Stanley as a servant. Margaret remained to comfort and assist her grandmother, who was often so ill, as to be unable to do any thing that required labour. Just at this time the kind sustaining care which had hitherto supported and upheld her, now provided an asylum she little expected or hoped for. The lodge became vacant ; and Mr. Stanley warmly recommended her to the steward of the estate. His recommendation, and her well-known good character proved successful ; and Mrs. Neville was duly appointed to the duties of the office. These were simple, and easy of performance. There was a small stipend attached to it ; and as her frugal habits enabled her to do with little, she thought it would be wrong in her to keep Margaret longer with her, as she might, though so young, be doing much better for herself in service. It was not without a struggle that Mrs. Neville had brought herself to consent to this ; but having once seen it, as she thought, to be her duty to do so, she was deaf to all remonstrances to the contrary. To the expostula-

tions of Margaret, who was loth to quit her, she would reply, " No, my dear, you shall not waste your time in unnecessary attendance upon me. I shall do very well ; my wants are few, and He who has supplied me all my life long, will not forsake me now." Mrs. Lawrence advised her not to part with her granddaughter, as her infirmities increased ; but offered, if she still wished to send Margaret to service, to take her into her own household. This was most gratefully accepted ; and now no feeling, merely personal, could avail to prevent her dear child from enjoying this advantage. She warmly expressed her thanks to Mrs. Lawrence for this additional act of kindness, and begged that she would receive Margaret as soon as she should be fixed at the lodge. This was accordingly done ; and Margaret took up her residence with her excellent mistress. Here she had been often accustomed to learn what was proper in domestic concerns ; she was therefore not quite new to the place.

Thus were the orphans situated in the families of their worthy benefactors, when an unexpected change took place in the views and

prospects of Elizabeth. To her unreflecting mind this change appeared trifling, as it regarded her future destiny—but its consequences were most important : of these however the simple inexperienced girl never thought. Novelty presented most fascinating charms, and she willingly gave up her mind to its seductive influence. She had now been with Mrs. Stanley some time, and conducted herself entirely to the satisfaction of her master and mistress, when a visiter was received into the family—a lady, who was a particular friend of Mrs. Stanley's, but with whom she had had little intercourse since her marriage. Soon after her arrival, she expressed great approbation of Elizabeth. Her appearance pleased her ; and scarcely waiting to discover what were the lights and shades of her character, mentioned to her friend her wish to have Elizabeth as an attendant upon her children. Mrs. Stanley spoke of her in favourable terms ; but gave no intimation either that she understood, or intended to comply with that lady's desire. When Mrs. Forbes perceived this, she spoke out more plainly, and, at last, succeeded in persuading Mrs. Stanley to put it to the option of

the girl, whether she would like to make the exchange. Though not at all pleased with the request, Mrs. Stanley could not but comply, and give Elizabeth the choice, as it was a matter in which she was so intimately concerned. The poor girl felt the most grateful attachment to her master and mistress, and would never have wished to leave their service ; but she was young and thoughtless, and of a gay and lively temper. A desire to see more of the world than their village afforded, had now and then crossed her mind ; but such an opportunity as the present she had never anticipated. She was delighted with her good fortune, and only wondered that her grandmother was not as much pleased as herself. After expatiating pretty largely upon her expected enjoyment, and her more enlarged opportunities of improvement, “ And then, only think,” said she, “ dear grandmother, what great wages I am to have : the half will be fully as much as I shall want to spend ; for they say every article of apparel is so very cheap in London. You cannot work as you used to do ; and now there will be no occasion, as I shall be able to send you

sufficient to prevent the necessity of your exerting yourself at all."

"Ah, my dear child!" replied the good dame, "you now speak in the honest simplicity of an innocent heart; but the world, I fear, will teach you another lesson. Alas! I dread the influence it may have upon you."

"But," answered Elizabeth, "I need not be wicked because others are so, who, perhaps, have not enjoyed such advantages as I have: indeed they never shall persuade me to do wrong, though they should try ever so much. I will always remember my religious duties, and fear God; and you know, dear grandmother, you have often told me, that is a sure way to be kept from evil."

"Well, my child," replied the good woman, "I cannot determine in this case; it is your wish to go. I can never cease to pray for you; and I hope you will never forget, or neglect to pray for yourself. And remember that if, after all, you are drawn into the fatal snares of an ungodly world—if, 'when sinners entice,' (as entice they will,) you should become their prey, O think what would be my affliction!

Indeed, my child, you would then bring down my grey hairs with sorrow to the grave."

Elizabeth was touched at the bare possibility of such baseness ; but she thought her grandmother was unnecessarily fearful, and that it was merely the apprehensions of affection, mixed, perhaps, with the imbecilities of age, which made her depict the world in colours so gloomy : besides she was resolved to uphold her integrity, and never be drawn aside from the path of rectitude. Ah ! how little did she know of herself—of her own heart ! or how weak are the best resolves of mortals, if unaided by divine strength ; Elizabeth, like our first mother Eve, wished to taste of the tree of knowledge, not understanding " that where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise."

Eager, however, as she was to enter upon a new scene, she could not part from her grandmother and sister, without shedding many tears. The first separation was a trial to each. After embracing with much affection, and Elizabeth promising not to neglect to read her Bible, and to practise her writing as much as she could, by sending a letter at every convenient opportunity, they parted. In pursuance

of our history, it will be necessary that we also leave, for a time, the worthy inhabitants of the village, and accompany Elizabeth into the gay and busy scenes which awaited her.

Much did she find to excite her astonishment in the course of her journey. Every town they passed through, supplied food for observation ; but when she entered the great metropolis, that crowded mart of business and of fashion, her very faculties seemed chained up in a state of surprise and wonder. The bustle of the public streets—the people hurrying along, eagerly intent upon some object of pursuit, presented such a contrast to the quietness of the scene she had lately left, that she could not help imagining some matter of high national importance had drawn together, as into one focus, the inhabitants of other cities, to form this vast and busy multitude. She looked up in the face of her mistress, and was greatly astonished to perceive there no indication of surprise. She scarcely believed it possible, that what had such a powerful effect upon her feelings, should be contemplated with such apathy and indifference. As the carriage drove on, a lengthened line of buildings seemed opening in

perspective ; while, on either hand, streets were branching out, far and wide, of which the eye could perceive no end. By the time they arrived at the place of their destination, fatigued with gazing, and almost deafened with the din, she earnestly hoped this extraordinary confusion would shortly be hushed to something more nearly allied to tranquillity and peace.

Elizabeth was soon domesticated in the nursery ; and as she was fond of children, and of a cheerful and winning deportment, she easily engaged their affections. She wrote her grandmother and sister an account of the wonders she had seen, and with much simplicity expressed her astonishment, that though so many days had passed, yet the same bustle seemed to prevail. Her fellow-servants told her, it was always so : but she could not give credence to this. She was not so simple as to expect a great city could be like a little country village, or even a market town ; but that it was always thus bustling and noisy, seemed a thing impossible. If she went out into the streets, in vain she waited for a clearer path ; she was still surrounded by an immense

throng, through which she with difficulty made her way. Such was the impression which the first few days' residence in London made upon the mind of Elizabeth. She soon, however, became familiarized to the scene.

CHAPTER VII.

"Is this the rugged path, the steep ascent,
That virtue points to? Can a life thus spent
Lead to the bliss she promises the wise,
Detach the soul from earth, and speed her to the skies?"

Cowper.

THE family with whom Elizabeth was now situated were considered very moral, and, by some persons, even religious characters. Their religion, however, was not of a sufficiently active or extensive kind; it passed not the precinct of their own apartments. It might indeed be said never to have passed the privacy of their own hearts, could one imagine it had ever found an entrance there. Their servants were permitted to attend church once, on the Sabbath, in their turn, but were accustomed to receive at home, neither exhortation nor advice. Every thing was regulated with due attentions to times and seasons; and this, as regards domestic, and other arrangements of a like sort, is well: but religion is adapted to any.

time, and to every season. Such however was not the opinion adopted by this professing family. The Bible and Prayer Book were punctually brought out upon the Sabbath, and placed in due form upon the table, when, perhaps, a chapter, and the lessons of the day were read, or at least looked over: but, at any other time to have seen these Sunday books out of the case, would have been as great an impropriety, as if the room had been crammed with unnecessary articles—presenting at once a scene of untidiness, confusion, and disorder. The Sunday over, the books were replaced upon the shelves, there to repose in security and quiet till the return of the day.

This Sunday religion went no farther than a mere external act of decency and decorum. It led them to the church once on the Sabbath; and the stated festivals and humiliation days were kept according to the statute: but in any other way religion was thrust into the background, as if the appearance of it had been something disgraceful. It was considered a want of good manners, even to touch upon the subject, and if any one, in social converse, when seated around the hospitable board, so

transgressed, as to allude to the Giver of every mercy, Mrs. Forbes was immediately silent; and though not unintelligent, would by no means hazard an observation upon so ungentle a topic. Mr. Forbes also would, with all the address he was master of, hasten to turn the conversation into a new channel; while the visitor who had been so unfortunate as to introduce the unwelcome theme, not unfrequently felt an embarrassment for which he could scarcely account: something indeed like one who has stumbled upon a forbidden subject, which reflects personal discredit upon an individual present, to whom, for particular reasons, he desires to recommend himself, and to conciliate rather than offend.

Ah! it is not in this way that religion can have its due and proper influence. Instead of being assumed merely upon festivals and high days, and that in a most cautious and guarded manner, it should be amalgamated with our very existence—it should be associated with every thought and feeling, and inspirit, with all its power, energy, and virtue, every action of our lives. Instead of the book of God being hid from public view, it should be made our daily

perusal, and our daily guide. Not that religion should be always upon our tongue, in the walks of public life, or even in the retirement of domestic peace—this is not only unnecessary, but, would often be highly improper; but no one can be at a loss to distinguish those times and seasons, in our various intercourse, when a mind rightly imbued with its principles, may find fit opportunity for the sacred topic.

This was indeed altogether a change of scene for Elizabeth. She long resisted the scoffing of the scorner; for her good habits had been inculcated with care—they had “grown with her growth, and strengthened with her strength:” but it requires more firmness of mind than the young and inexperienced ever possess, to continue to stem the torrent of ridicule, and dare to be singular, and remain “faithful among the faithless.” She had been accustomed to read a few verses of her Bible, and then to offer up, her petitions and thanksgivings, both when she arose in the morning, and when she retired to rest at night; but by degrees her Bible began to be neglected; her prayers became less frequent; the world presented irresistible charms, she admired its fashions; she loved and longer

for its pleasures. Her mistress had once or twice imprudently permitted her to visit the theatre, in company with a fellow-servant ; and having thus imbibed a relish for such scenes, she would much rather have gone to the play-house, than to the house of God. Yet she was less happy than formerly ; her spirits unsettled ; her temper less sweet, and patient. This is ever the case when there is reason for self-reproach. She was now and then aroused to a sense of her duties, by a letter from her sister, which conveyed to her the pious and affectionate admonitions of her grandmother. She would then feel that after all, it is in the way of religion alone that true peace is to be experienced. She resolved, and re-resolved ; but failure still succeeded, and every effort become fainter and fainter, till she lost all delight in the way of righteousness. When she did bend the knee before the throne of God, it was with the servility of a slave ; not with the love and reverence of a child. Her religious education had imposed some salutary restraints, from which she vainly struggled to be free : for though sin was less and less alarming to her conscience, yet she could not indulge it wholly,

without remorse. Her conduct indeed exhibited nothing of a glaringly immoral character ; she gained the favour of her master and mistress, and the esteem of her fellow-servants ; but her heart was not right with God, and of this they were both unable and unfit to be the judges. They told her she was greatly improved, since she had left off her methodistical ways, and changed her fanatical opinions ; and had become somewhat more like the rest of the world. But, alas ! when reflection obtruded itself upon her mind, and she thought of the happy Sabbaths she had been wont to spend, when engaged in the duties of religion, she felt the void they had left to be such as the frivolities of the world could never fill.

It may be imagined, that because Elizabeth was a servant, she could not have much time, nor indeed possess the means necessary for an indulgence in gaiety and pleasure ; and as to her Sabbaths, if they were not so strictly kept as formerly, yet they could not but be quiet and orderly, as the family had regard to appearances. To those who think but lightly upon the subject, all-important as it is, such might appear the case ; and it is true that her situa-

tion prevented her from entering, with all that avidity she would have done, upon the giddy pursuits of an evil world; but her mind was corrupted by the baneful influence of the fascinations daily presented to her view. Her Sabbaths were passed in a very different way to what she had been accustomed, when in the family of the excellent Mr. Stanley. With them, the whole of the first day of the week was accounted holy and honourable; in the cottage of her grandmother, likewise, every hour was held sacred; but, in this fashionable family, an attendance at church, once in the day, was the only mark of religious distinction, and Mrs. Forbes plumed herself not a little upon the regularity with which she attended to this duty, and enforced it upon her household, each in their turn: as if the worship of God, in his temple, was a sort of penance which they were bound to perform, not expected to enjoy. The remainder of the day was spent as they pleased, unless company was expected; when their services would, of course, be required. Elizabeth being an entire stranger, felt no inclination, for some time, to avail herself of this freedom, except to attend a second time on

the public worship of God: she however was at last induced to accompany one of the other servants to enjoy, as she said, the pleasure of a walk, and to drink tea at one of the tea gardens.

It may appear somewhat fastidious and unreasonable to declaim against such apparent innocent enjoyments; but let any, even the most common observer, say, whether these Sunday walks and recreations can long be indulged in, without danger. Do not these tea-gardens abound with temptation? Do they not exhibit scenes of riot and of vice, such as no Christian could contemplate without a feeling of horror? "Evil communications corrupt good manners," said an apostle; and who is there so established in goodness, as to be secure from the dire contagion?

G*

CHAPTER VIII.

"Evil *she* needs would try, nor tried in vain.
 Dreadful experiment ! destructive measure !
 Where the worst thing could happen is success !
 Alas ! too well *she* sped ; the Good *she* scorned,
 Stalked off reluctant, like an ill-used ghost,
 Not to return : or if it did, its visits,
 Like those of angels, short and far between."

Blair.

WHEN Elizabeth left the abode of her infancy, she was young and unsophisticated, and she was caught by the guile of the corrupt, ere she felt her danger. Her manners and attire were now alike changed. She was no longer the artless, unaffected girl, pleased with simplicity and neatness. She was now vain of her person, and fond of bedecking it in finery beyond her station. Her intention of saving from her wages, to supply the wants of her grandmother, was frustrated ; dress demanded all. Conscience sometimes whispered, and upbraided her, with a bitter voice ; but a new gown, or ribbon, presented charms she was unable to resist. Reflection, however, was not always to be

avoided. There were seasons when she could not escape ; and then she would shed tears of short-lived contrition, and vow before God renewal of obedience : but, like “the morning cloud, and early dew,” these resolutions passed away, and her devotional feelings became less and less ardent—less and less frequent—till her assimilation with the world no longer rendered it a matter of doubt to observers, on whose side Elizabeth had declared.

The Sabbath returns, like the seasons, in regular succession—and like them too, it comes to bless mankind ; its services tend to refresh the wearied spirit, to invigorate the mind, to amend the heart.

“What says the Prophet? Let that day be blest
 With holiness and consecrated rest.
 Pastime and business both it should exclude
 And bar the door the moment they intrude ;
 Nobly distinguished above all the six
 By deeds in which the world must never mix.
 Hear him again. He calls it a delight,
 A day of luxury, observed aright ;
 When the glad soul is made Heaven’s welcome guest,
 Sits banquetting, and God provides the feast.”

But Elizabeth no longer felt its spiritual influence ; she welcomed its approach, indeed, but not as a day of “holy convocation,” in which

she was neither to think her own thoughts, nor to speak her own words ; but as a day of worldly enjoyment, if circumstances permitted, if not, she felt it to be a day of lassitude and weariness. “ When will the Sabbath be over ! how tedious are its hours ! how mortifying its restraints ! ” If these were not the words of her lips, they were too often the sentiments of her heart. Nor was she singular in this, for she had often heard her master unhesitatingly express the same sentiments, and observe that Sunday was always the longest day in the week, and when it was wet on that day it was intolerable.

And yet those persons, and many others, who thus think and act, dare to call themselves Christians. How vain a thing is Christianity, if it may be thus loosely worn ! But, my reader, trust me, it is quite another thing. It is not merely taste, profession, or even feeling. What is intrinsically excellent must be admired, and may for that reason be counterfeited ; and the mind may so drink in, as it were, its beauties, as to be affected, and deeply too, but if it is only that sort of excitation which may be produced by some well-wrought fiction, it mere-

ly “ plays around the head, but comes not to the heart.” Such was not the religion of the disciples of Antioch, or they might have borne any other name as well as that of Christian : nor is such the Christianity of the Scriptures. If the services of the Sabbath are a weariness—if there is no delight in the worship of God—no hatred of sin—no love of holiness ; if, on the contrary, the heart is filled with the pleasures, the vanities, or engrossed with the business, and the cares of the present world—what, in such a case, could heaven promise, even though this should be the way to attain it. Think of its purity—its holiness—its worship ; how could a heart in love with evil endure to contemplate the spotless glories of Him who receives the adoration of angels ; and before whose transcendent splendour even the sinless intelligences that surround the throne veil their faces with their wings ? Human righteousness indeed, at the very best, falls so short of the just demands of God’s holy law, that we cannot by it be entitled to the divine favour. St. Paul again and again affirms this. “ Not by works of righteousness that we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us.” “ By grace are

ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." "Not of works, lest any man should boast." But though our righteousness, or good works, or holy obedience be nothing efficient as the means of acceptance, as from their imperfection it is clear they cannot, yet it is thus that the sanctifying influence of the Spirit of God is felt and discerned, and it is thus that we are made meet for the heavenly inheritance, and (to use the language of an eminent Christian author) are rendered "fit for the blessedness, and the employments, and the whole companionship of paradise." Again, though our merit be perfectly null as to its claims, yet it is necessary as a "personal accomplishment for the kindred society" of glorified spirits, of God, and of the Lamb.

Let any one call forth the powers of the mind, and endeavour to make his thoughts bear for a little upon the importance of this subject, and his own individual concern in it, he will then be at no loss to understand the nature of *evil*, (alas! its power is too much felt by all,) let him then contrast it with the nature of *goodness*. Adam's fall entailed the former upon his posterity. How sad a legacy! to which,

by our own conduct, we have made most fearful additions ! When man was created, he was made free from imperfection : his head was crowned with innocence, and his heart filled with happiness. Yet though warned, did he become the victim of the tempter. His disobedience let loose the flood-gates of evil, and its dark waters have continued, from that hour to the present, to pour forth their overwhelming tide upon all his posterity. And no help could have been found—no salvation from death eternal, had not the Son of the blessed God, in a mysterious way, united his Godhead with humanity, and thus, “when the fulness of the time was come,” in that nature which had sinned, made an atonement for the transgressors. In our Redeemer we have a pattern of goodness—“goodness infinite !” He left his celestial glory which he had with the Father before all worlds, became a man with men, and submitted to all the privations and the sorrows of an evil world : to death itself, and that in its most ignominious form, though the Lord of life and glory. Satan was permitted to try him with his most potent temptations, but he could not be defiled with sin. In vain pleasure assail-

ed him with her seductive smiles ; in vain ambition proffered the honours and the dignities of kingly power ; the treasures of the world were poured out at his feet. “ All these things will I give thee,” said the tempter, “ if thou wilt fall down and worship me.” But *he*—the second Adam—the Restorer—the Saviour—could suffer no surprisal. He foiled the tempter even with his own weapons, and left in this, his resistance and his conquest, an example to his followers how they also may “ overcome evil with good.”

CHAPTER IX.

"One part, one little part, we dimly scan,
 Through the dark medium of life's feverish dream ;
 Yet dare arraign the whole stupendous plan,
 If but that little part incongruous seem.
 Nor is that part perhaps what mortals deem :
 Oft from apparent ill our blessings rise.
 O then renounce that impious self-esteem,
 That aims to trace the secrets of the skies :
 For thou art but of dust—be humble, and be wise."

Beattie.

THUS did the carelessness and indifference of a family, professedly Christian, damp the spiritual feelings, and chill the ardour of devotion, which the piety of instructors and friends had so long endeavoured to cherish in the mind of Elizabeth ; and in addition to all this, she had, most unhappily for her peace, commenced an acquaintance with a young man, who, though in the possession of good natural abilities, improved by a tolerable education, and who had read much, yet was his judgment weak, and his mind inflated with vanity and self-conceit. In an evil hour, works of infidelity were pre-

sented to his view. Unaware of their subtlety, and unconscious of his own weakness, he believed that he had only to read in order to refute; and certainly this would have been the case, had he possessed more real and genuine knowledge, and less speculative vanity; but blinded by his own folly, he was soon entangled in the flimsy cob-web meshes of the infidel, and fell a victim to their poor delusion.

His new opinions were imparted to Elizabeth. At first she started at the subject, then she began to endure the conversation; this was enough. The poison soon ran, as it were, through her veins, and carried its deadly influence to her heart. Happy had it been for her had she but applied at first the only effectual antidotes—the word of God and prayer. O! who that has rightly studied the writings of Moses and the Prophets, and felt the ecstatic glow of devotion which the Psalms of David are fitted to inspire—who that has read the history of the Saviour of the world, and the epistles of his devoted followers, could turn from the sacred page that points to life and immortality, and bewilder themselves in the mazes of infidel philosophy? Who, in the possession of sound

judgment and reason, would reject the clear sunshine of meridian day, and hasten to hide in the dreary dungeon's gloom, or shroud them in the darkness of midnight? Who would exchange the bright evidence of Christian faith for the doubts and misgivings of infidelity? What mighty discovery of the secrets of nature has the deist made? Who and what is he, that he should darken "counsel by words without knowledge?" What does he offer as an equivalent for the sacred Scriptures? The ancient teachers, the wise and reflecting philosophers of Athens and of Rome, being ignorant of that divine revelation of which the scoffing modern infidel knows not the value, entertained the most gloomy notions. They knew not what to propose as the chief good; some imagined it to consist in one thing, and some in another. So various, indeed, were their opinions, that a writer of that period reckons up nearly three hundred. Some believed in the transmigration of souls, that the undying spirit should be condemned to animate other bodies, even the bodies of inferior animals, and thus be continual wanderers, suffering either in one form or another all the ills of an unblest

existence. Others “contemplated the grave as their eternal habitation, and sadly complained that the sun and stars would set again, but that man, when his day was set, must lie down in darkness, and sleep a perpetual sleep.” These, and a thousand other visionary fantasies, are, even in this enlightened age, the reveries not of heathens only, but of men born in a Christian land, possessing the inestimable treasure of the sacred oracles, but “they like not to retain God in their knowledge ;” they love not the truth ; they cannot stand its test ; their characters, reflected in its pure unsullied mirror, disclose so much deformity, that they are fain to turn from the contemplation.

So assiduously did Elizabeth strive to divest herself of every serious thought, it was through the grace of heaven alone that the holy flame was not entirely extinguished. Alas ! this is the case with many. They resist and repel those sacred influences which would have operated upon their souls like the fructifying dews of heaven, and encourage in their stead those vain delusions, which, like the faithless mirage of the desert, produce, in the end, only chagrin, disappointment, and despair. Reckless of good,

these careless, unthinking victims rush forward with avidity to their own destruction.—“Youth,” say they, “is the season of delight, the happy morn of life, let us haste to seize its pleasures, let us crown ourselves with rosebuds, and drain the cup of enjoyment.” Soon, very soon, does experience prove the futility of all this ; religion alone is the true source of enjoyment ; it is only in the possession of the divine favour that the heart can taste peace or rest. It will be thought, perhaps, that we are wandering widely from our subject ; but it is our object, in this account of Elizabeth, to give rather a history of the heart than of the life, except in so far as the incidents tend to the development of feeling.

Elizabeth had now remained for three years in the service of Mrs. Forbes, and what an alteration of character had that time produced ! When religion was allowed to exercise its sweet and gentle influence, her temper was mild and conciliating ; she was accustomed to reply to, and attend the commands of, her mistress with meekness and with modesty ; but now an assuming, pert, self-sufficiency rendered her services less useful, as well as her manners less obliging.

One Sunday, as she was preparing to go out, as it was what is usually called *her* Sunday, having made an engagement to spend the afternoon with some acquaintances of the same light turn of mind as herself, her mistress thought fit to command her attendance at home; this she considered as an infringement upon her privileges, and, though obliged to comply, she did so in a way that displeased Mrs. Forbes very much, and she expressed her disapprobation.—Elizabeth felt too keenly the disappointment of her expected pleasure, to reply with the modesty becoming her station, and she was discharged from her place in consequence.

After leaving the service of Mrs. Forbes, she determined, before she sought out for another situation, to visit the peaceful village in which she had passed her happiest days. She yearned once more to embrace her venerable grandmother, and her amiable sister. “I am altered,” she said to herself, “since I left them, it is true, and my grandmother would not approve the alteration if she knew it; but then would they, if they had seen as much of life, and heard the difference of opinion that I have, not have been altered too? Yet, perhaps, af-

ter all, I have gained no advantage over them ; they are content with one unvaried scene of quietness and peace ; and their prejudices, if they are prejudices, only tend to make them happy : yes ! it must be confessed that their faith gilds the present hour, and brightens all the future. Would to God I had retained this simple faith ! when I was religious I was happy, and this is not the case with me now !”

Here was a confession of the impotence of infidel principles that might have led to more serious reflection, and have been productive of reform ; but Elizabeth’s evil genius, in the person of Richard Copeland, soon laughed her out of her godly scruples, and again she ventured to think (for she could not, though she tried, *believe* the lie) that religion was all a farce—an invention of priest-craft, fitted only to beguile the ignorant, but which the enlightened mind, and philosophic inquirer, turned from with disgust. How weak is the reasoning faculty of man on the subject of religion, when once he suffers himself to be entangled in the wily mazes of scepticism ! What can be more absurd ? He impiously derides the faith of the gospel, and passes it by under the terms preju-

dice ! credulity ! fanaticism ! But *the faith* that (rejecting divine revelation) is condemned to believe the most monstrous absurdities, and to place the most galling shackles upon the mind, is denominated liberal, and free. Turn, O turn away from the scoffer, leave him to the Moloch he worships, let him not destroy your peace, nor quench your hopes ; fix, firmly fix upon the immoveable rock of divine revelation, for though heaven and earth pass away, yet He who made the heavens, and the earth, hath declared *its* duration to be eternal. “My words,” says the Saviour, “shall not pass away.”

Mrs. Neville and Margaret were delighted in the expectation of again meeting Elizabeth. The day anxiously looked for, arrived, and Mrs. Lawrence kindly permitted Margaret to visit the lodge, that she might receive her sister. The hours appeared to pass unusually slow, and the stage, though they knew it to be one of the swiftest that passed through the village, seemed now unusually late. Margaret was continually running to the gate to look out for its approach, and the good dame, though more reasonable in her expectations, was scarce-

ly less impatient, so anxious was she once more to embrace her child. At length Margaret's keen eye caught sight of the vehicle which was to convey her sister. It was yet at a distance—she saw it upon the summit of a hill—presently it descended and was lost to her view: her heart palpitated, and she was almost breathless with suspense. Soon, however, an opening in the trees made it again visible; it came on with rapid motion, the panting horses scarcely seemed to touch the ground; it drew near, but Margaret strained her eyes in vain to recognize Elizabeth. “Oh! grandmother,” she exclaimed, “she is not there, some ladies and gentlemen are on the top of the coach, but Elizabeth is not there.” “Perhaps, my dear,” replied the good woman, who was also directing her eager, though feeble gaze towards it, “perhaps she is seated on the other side.” “O no indeed, grandmother,” answered Margaret, “I see them all quite well; they are all fine folks, my sister is not come.” Margaret burst into tears, and was about to turn away, when, to her astonishment, the coach stopped, and one of the fine folks began to descend. She gazed upon her with wonder, and scarcely be-

lieved it possible that she beheld her sister, till she saw her embrace her grandmother, and felt herself pressed to her bosom.

Tea was quickly prepared for the traveller, and perhaps a more affectionate and happy groupe never partook of the exhilarating beverage. Elizabeth and Margaret looked with wonder at each other, both were altered in person, and both improved. Margaret could not help stealing a glance at the difference of dress which Elizabeth displayed, but she had that intuitive politeness which, even among the least refined in mind and manners, restrains undue curiosity. She was at the same time, fearful of directing her grandmother's attention to it, well knowing that she would not approve. This however was needless, the good dame was not blind to the altered appearance of her child. She viewed the flowing curls, and fine ribboned cap, with a painful sense of their impropriety. Turning her eyes upon her village girl, the contrast was striking; and while she looked with pleasure at her neat and simple attire, she put up a mental prayer, that she might not be led to adopt the vanities of an evil world, and that her dear Elizabeth might be rescued

from its snares. This she felt, however, to be an hour of happiness, and she would not imbitter it by any ill-timed remarks.

During the long period of their separation, Mrs. Neville had not been unmindful of her wanderer. She had feared, greatly feared, for her stability in the good ways she had been taught. A letter, which Elizabeth had sent to her sister, was couched in such terms, that, though they little understood its purport, (nor indeed was it clear even to its writer,) yet both thought all was not right. There was a darkness and ambiguity of language—a confusion of ideas, unlike the unadorned simplicity of truth; so that, unversed as they were in the wiles of the world, they felt a dread upon their spirits. Margaret, however, was soon induced to impute to the giddy levity and light-heartedness of her sister, that which she felt to be wrong, though she could not well comprehend its meaning. The anxious parent could not so easily divest herself of her fears, and she often passed the midnight hour in prayer.

A few days served to convince the good woman there was indeed ground for all her fears. Elizabeth was as much changed in mind, as in

person. The country, though clothed in all its verdure, presenting on every side nought but loveliness and beauty, soon became dull and uninteresting to her vitiated taste : religion and its professors alike tiresome ; she saw no beauty in holiness—felt no delight in the contemplation of God and goodness. At first, the sight of her benefactor and pastor affected her, and the tones of that voice she had so often listened to with reverence, struck the chords of feeling ; almost unconsciously she joined in the prayer which he offered, and thought, that could she always hear Mr. Stanley, she might be able to visit the church even twice upon the Sabbath, without thinking the service so very long and tedious, as she had lately done.

Mrs. Neville wept over the alienated state of her poor girl, and fervently prayed that she might be brought to a love of the truth. Mrs. Stanley was sorry that Elizabeth had ever left her service, for the more fashionable family of Mrs. Forbes. No one could be unmindful of the alteration which her residence in the metropolis had made ; and while her dress and manners became the topic for ridicule among

her rustic neighbours, her former friends and benefactors grieved at the change.

Elizabeth dared not sport her new opinions before her grandmother, but she said enough to convince the good woman that the tempter had been employing his wiles. She became inquisitive about the young man, Elizabeth confessed an acquaintance with, and, with sorrow of heart, heard that he was *not a Christian*. She rejoiced that there were some difficulties thrown in the way of their union, and sincerely hoped it would never take place, and though Elizabeth boasted of his respectability, and of his good qualities, the want of "the one thing needful," rendered every other recommendation of no value in her account.

As Elizabeth could not be prevailed upon to take a situation in the country, it became necessary that she should return to town to seek service; thither we propose to accompany her, and again leave the placid delights of rural life, to review scenes of deep and painful interest.

CHAPTER X.

"In that dread moment, how the frantic soul
 Raves round the walls of her clay tenement !
 Runs to each avenue, and shrieks for help,
 But shrieks in vain ! How wishfully she looks
 On all she's leaving, now no longer hers !
 A little longer, yet a *little* longer,
 Oh, might she stay to wash away her stains,
 And fit her for her passage ! Mournful sight !
 Her very eyes weep blood, and every groan
 She heaves is big with horror."

Blair.

ELIZABETH soon obtained a situation, but as the character of the family respecting holy things formed no part of her inquiries, and she had long ceased to seek for that direction in all her ways, which might have guided her steps aright, it is no wonder that she should now fall among those who not only made no profession of religion, but even indulged in a mockery of what they called its formal pretensions. It was here, however, by the good providence of God, whose eye was still upon her, and who had designs of mercy towards her, that she was, by a

solemn event, to receive a check in her wanderings, and be brought back with sorrow and repentance to the fold of God.

The family to whom she had engaged her services, lived in all the dissipation and gaiety of those, who seek their only pleasure—their only portion in this life. Their Sabbaths were altogether desecrated ; neither rest nor retirement marked the hallowed hours ; they were devoted entirely to what they styled *pleasure*. Jaunts into the country, visiting, and receiving company, were the allotted engagements, and these were pursued with greater avidity upon the holy day, than upon any other.

Mrs. Holcroft was often a severe sufferer from ill health, many and frequent were the admonitions which affliction gave ; the “still small voice” often whispered *prepare*, “prepare to meet thy God.” But alas ! she would not give ear : even in the solitude of her chamber, she would contrive to silence the intruder with the noise and din of this world’s vanities. If the sickness was too severe for her to bear with all the folly, and the silly gossip of pretended friends, then indeed she was wretched. She possessed no resources in her own mind—

she did not love God—she knew nothing of his holiness. His goodness did not constrain her love and obedience, nor did she even understand its nature, though perpetually the subject of it; if she ever bestowed a thought at all upon the matter, it was, that he was merciful, and would never punish sin, or look upon his creatures in any other way than with favour; and that whatever divines might say, so long as pity was showed to the poor, and honesty towards all, no more was required. The Bible would have taught another and a holier lesson, but, though Mrs. Holcroft spared no expense in the costliness of her ornaments, or the richness of her plate and furniture, this heavenly treasure was not among her possessions. This book of God—this guide to eternal life, found not a place in her dwelling. The New Testament, indeed, had by some means gained an entrance, but even this small and very precious portion of divine truth, lay a sealed book, entirely neglected, whilst novels and romances, and works of most trifling interest, were perused with avidity.

The injury incurred by this sort of reading is incalculable. The imagination becomes

vitiated by the high excitement ; and that very faculty, which, under proper control, serves to gild with its glowing tints the sober certainties of life, becomes, by its abuse, a bane to its possessor.

At length Mrs. Holcroft's illness increased to an alarming height, and it became evident to her friends that it was certainly unto death. Elizabeth was a kind and attentive nurse. With looks of pity, and words of respectful tenderness, she endeavoured to administer relief; but she was shocked at the bitterness of her repining spirit, and notwithstanding all that Richard could urge, she could not be convinced, but that Mrs. Holcroft would have borne her sufferings with much greater fortitude had she possessed the faith of Christianity, or known aught of the true believer's hopes. For this once the sophistry of her deistical lover failed of its intended effect. Facts speak loudly, and she could not but contrast this case with that of her pious grandmother, whom she had often seen racked with pain, and suffering severe distress for want of means to procure relief, yet, through the faith of the gospel, still possessing her soul in patience. On the contrary, Mrs.

Holcroft was so peevish and dissatisfied, that every expedient which her attendants could adopt, failed to pacify; and she gave way to such paroxysms of rage, as drove them terrified from her presence. Every luxury was obtained to tempt her appetite, and every diversion, no matter how childish and absurd, which could be introduced into the chamber of sickness, was admitted. She was furious if any one looked grave, and did not flatter her with hopes of amendment, constantly asserting that she was better, and should soon recover—that she was not going to die yet. These assertions, improper as they were for any period, or in any circumstances, were constantly made, when, from the very nature of the case, it was impossible she could be ignorant of her being actually on the borders of the grave. Yet so ardently did she foster this self-delusion, and indulge in the ill-founded expectation of resuming her usual habits of dissipation and extravagance, that she ordered every preparation to be made for her to join a gay and thoughtless party, to see some races, the time for which drew near: but alas! the feet of death were nearer still. Orders were actually given for a new

dress, in which she might appear to grace the festive scene ; but, instead of shining forth in all the splendour of a vain attire, the sad funeral robe was to envelope her pale and stiffened form.

So determined was her incredulity, that to the last hour of her life she continued to drive the thoughts of death from her mind, and to assert that her recovery was certain ; but she neither deceived herself, nor others, though she strove with all her might to do both ; she felt that the sands of life were running fast away ; and notwithstanding her pretences, she would shriek with horror, and call out with vehemence, as if speaking to some one : “ What do you want ? I tell you I am not ready. I shall not die.” She would not suffer the Bible to be introduced, nor hear it named ; and made a scoff at all who approached her with looks of pity. To some faithful admonitions and inquiries kindly urged by a friend, whom she had long known and esteemed, she demanded what she meant by her pity, inquiring at the same time whether it was her wish to make her unhappy ; and upon receiving, though in the most delicate way, information of the truth of her state, she

broke out into the most dreadful language and insulting speeches, desiring that she would leave her apartment, and giving orders that she should never again be permitted to enter it. Thus did she drive away all who would have done her any good, and allowed the approach of none but those whose principles were too lax to run the risk of giving her offence, and too mercenary to venture the loss of those presents she was wont to bestow upon her favourites. They read novels and romances to her from morning till night: even upon the Sabbath she demanded this service from them.

Such hardened and determined opposition to all that was good, shocked even these graceless characters; what then must have been its effect upon the now thoughtful and horror-struck Elizabeth! Here was room for meditation. See now the boasted triumph of infidelity! What did it do for this poor unhappy woman? Did it soothe one pang? Did it inspire one hope; even the gloomy hope of annihilation? Oh no! there is a consciousness within that refutes the specious lie, and the spirit of man **FEELS** its nature to be immortal. Did it with all its blandishments lull to repose the tortured

conscience? Alas! no, it but added fresh power to the worm that never dies. Accompany me, my reader, but a little further, and you will find that misery marked the *present*, and horror and despair steeped the *future* in deepest gloom.

The solemn hour drew on apace, the awful moment approached; but still madly seeking amusement even in the arms of death, she desired the friend who was attending, to resume her favourite reading. This demand shocked the person to whom it was addressed, and she ventured to remonstrate, pleading that it was the Sabbath-day; she begged rather to be permitted to read the Bible. Mrs. Holcroft, not expecting this, fell into one of those fits of anger which she had of late given way to, when any one opposed her will. In the midst of this effusion of madness, a spasm seized her; the sudden change in her countenance proclaimed the truth to her affrighted friend: uttering an exclamation which conveyed the dreadful tidings to the unhappy self-deluded victim. She hastened from the chamber to summon help. Alas! Mrs. Holcroft was now past all human aid: conviction struck upon her startled soul;

deception was no more. In vain she tried to pray, "Lord have mercy upon me, what shall I do to be saved!—pray for me—I shall die!—I shall die!—O what is it you want with me?—see! they are waiting—I am not ready—I tell you, I am not ready. O murder! murder! what do they want with me?" She continued to utter this and similar language, accompanied with the most appalling shrieks, attempting to force herself out of the bed. Her struggles were so violent that her horror-struck husband and attendants were obliged to hold her down; while her shrieks of murder and entreaties for mercy thrilled through their very souls. They had neither hope nor consolation to give. In vain they begged of her to be calm. Alas! what could calm the wildness of her despair—the distraction of her now awakened conscience! Her hour of grace was rapidly closing. Her sun was setting in thickest darkness; not one ray of hope—not one gleam of comfort broke upon the midnight blackness of her despair. All her refuges of lies failed, and her soul could find neither repose, nor peace. The frenzied visions she had indulged, faded away for ever, and eternity, with all its dread reali-

ties, opened upon her distracted mind. The false gloss with which the speciousness of self-delusion had covered her doings, was now removed, and she found, to her utter dismay, that all her vaunted virtues—her charities—her goodness—her upright intentions, were all but splendid sins. Alas! she had nothing wherein to trust. The spotless robe of imputed righteousness she had never seen her need of, and therefore had never sought, and now that her spirit was about to drop its mortal covering, and stand in the immediate presence of its Judge, how would it be able to bear the scrutiny of his all-piercing eye! Alas! alas! neither rocks, nor hills can screen her from his view; and her soul naked and destitute, must stand exposed to the dreadful storms of divine wrath.

When Mrs. Holcroft was in the possession of health and affluence, she enjoyed the blessings, without thinking of the hand that bestowed them: she would not seek the Lord; and when stricken by the darts of affliction, she but hardened her heart the more, rejected his word and his ways, and set at nought his reproof; and now in her soul's dire exigency the awful

denunciation was fulfilled, "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and ye did not regard; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof, I also will laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind, when distress and anguish cometh upon you."

Here, with trembling hand, we drop the veil, and close the dreadful scene. But think not, my reader, that this is a fictitious tale, conjured up merely to beguile you of your tears; or, that it is the offspring of a gloomy fancy, or fanatic imagination. No! it is truth that directs the pen; but the solemn event was attended with circumstances of such horror, that we possess not powers of language sufficient for its description. Yet even in this faint delineation, we shall have failed in our design, if it merely touches your feelings without reaching and affecting your conscience. Now in your day of health and vigour, we pray you earnestly to seek after those things which will make for your present and for your eternal peace. A preparation for eternity is necessary for every

child of the dust. Strive then while you may, to enter in at the strait gate, lest, by unwise and sinful procrastination, you should find its entrance for ever barred against you. A death-bed repentance is a poor resource to trust to. Even though the faculties should be clear as ever, (and this is not to be expected, while the frame is agonizing) yet how awful, how solemn is the event, even to the Christian, who is about to enter into the joy of his Lord ! How much more awful ! how dreadful to the unprepared sinner, (if conscience once awake) who has now a business to be performed at his last gasp sufficient to have occupied the whole of his former life ! Happiness is the natural pursuit of every human being, but how various and devious are the paths they take to find it. The Sun of Righteousness shines forth in all his glorious effulgence, but there are those who, loving darkness rather than the light, hide them from his cheering rays, and grope their way by the blind imagination of their own evil hearts ; but the end of such declare to what they have attained.

Sorrow is ever attendant upon sin ; they are indissolubly connected. And yet the love of

ease, of happiness, and of life, are feelings that will not part from the human bosom. But if affliction and sorrow fill up, and death close the scene of such a troubled existence, how are these to be attained? This is a question which fallen man might have asked, and asked in vain, had not "the gospel of the ever blessed God" taught us to rise superior to the sufferings of this mortal state, pointed out the road to happiness, and brought life and immortality most graciously to light.

Yes! it is religion alone that can guide the mind of man to peace, that can fix the hopes upon a right foundation—the religion of the Bible. O turn not aside from this holy book; peruse it with interest, with earnestness, with prayer. Let it be your daily study—it shuns not research—it courts investigation. Its precepts are pure and holy, and worthy of the God who gave them. It is a revelation of his will—a declaration of his mercy; and while it shows us the sinfulness and depravity of that state into which we are fallen, it also points out the way to regain our lost innocence and dignity. It directs us to live, as the children of our heavenly Father, above the follies and maxims

of this wicked world, and teaches us to raise our views to realms where righteousness reigns. It informs us that Jesus Christ is "the way, the truth, and the life," that "having made peace by the blood of his cross, he will give repentance and remission of sins," to all who earnestly seek his grace. He has satisfied divine justice by the atonement which he offered, and which none but Christ could satisfy, for none but he, who himself in the nature of his Godhead was infinite, could meet the awards of the broken law, and make it honourable. In a mysterious manner, he became incarnate ; and the bursting song of joy which angels awoke in heaven, descended even down into the plains of Bethlehem. "Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth and good-will towards men."

In the time of health and strength, when the mind is vigorous, and the faculties are clear, we should study our own characters with impartiality ; examine ourselves, not through the beclouded medium of self-love, but through the impartial glass of clear unsullied truth ; and, though we may start at the dark spots and blemishes it will assuredly display : yet if it make

us more humble, and penitent, and grateful, the result will greatly counterbalance the difficulty, and even the grief, attending the trial. By this analysis we shall be led to reflect upon the holiness, the purity, the justice, the goodness, and mercy of our Creator ; and thus contemplating infinite perfection, shall pray earnestly for grace, that we may be made holy even as he is holy, and perfect even as he is perfect, and never rest satisfied with any supposed attainment, but, like the apostle, “ press forward toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” It is our highest interest as well as our bounden duty thus to act, for thus, and thus only, can true happiness be found. Thus decided in our attachment to God, and earnestly, though humbly seeking his favour, we shall be enabled to go on our way, always hoping, if not always rejoicing ; and when that hour so terrible to nature, shall at last arrive, we shall not have to say, “ I am not ready :” the language of our happy spirits will rather be, “ Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.”

CHAPTER XI.

'Twas thus by the glare of false science betray'd,
 That leads to bewilder, and dazzles to blind ;
 My thoughts wont to roam, from shade onward to shade,
 Destruction before me, and sorrow behind.
 " O pity, great Father of light," then I cried,
 " Thy creature, who fain would not wander from thee.
 Lo, humble in dust, I relinquish my pride,
 From doubt and from darkness thou only canst free."

THE awful death of Mrs. Holcroft affected the mind of Elizabeth with dismay and sorrow. She once more sought her God in fervent prayer, and turned for comfort to her Bible. For some time, indeed, she found no comfort ; on the contrary, every denunciation of almighty vengeance seemed levelled against her devoted head. Fain would Richard have persuaded her that it was a fit of nervous low spirits with which she was assailed, and that, by and by, her heart would be lightened, and she would become cheerful and gay as ever. All his reasonings fell coldly upon her heart ; it was not in *his* principles she could find refuge ; it was not in *his* principles she could now seek for comfort : but too recently had she

witnessed their insufficiency to afford either consolation or hope. The conflict of her spirits brought on illness, and she could no longer perform the duties of her station. It was now well for her that the Christian charities of the wealthy had founded asylums for support and medical relief, for not one of her acquaintances would afford her the shelter of their roof. True friendship cannot exist among the wicked ; it is a sacred flame which their impure spirits cannot cherish ; they have but the semblance of it, an *ignis fatuus*, which the storm of adversity soon extinguishes.

Elizabeth had been too fond of dress to allow either of her sending her grandmother the aid she promised, or to save of her wages for the hour of need. What little money she possessed, was soon expended, and she was happy to procure admittance into an hospital. Here, then, behold this gay and thoughtless girl, suffering not only the pains of bodily affliction, but the far worse sickness of the soul, reproach of conscience and conviction of sin. "The spirit of a man may sustain his infirmities, but a wounded spirit who can bear !" Some of her acquaintance visited her once or twice : but

Elizabeth turned from their conversation with disgust, not a feeling of her soul was in unison with theirs. Their attempts at consolation entirely failed. They quickly tired in their attentions ; and she was soon left to sigh and to suffer alone ; even Richard, notwithstanding all his professions of attachment, grew cool. But the conduct of these “summer friends” gave her little disquietude. A short time since, and it would have aroused all the angry passions of her nature ; but now her whole soul was taken up with other objects, was all occupied with other concerns. Her Bible was a treasure she now wondered that she had ever valued so lightly : the more she perused it, the more clearly did she perceive that it bore the stamp of eternal truth ; and that its characters were emblazoned as with the glory of Jehovah. Her dazzled and delighted eye now beamed fresh animation ; her heart glowed with love divine ; and her voice burst forth in songs of praise. The word of grace which, through the medium of the scriptures, was addressed to her soul, came with power. She was humbled, yet comforted. “Hast thou not procured this unto thyself, in that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy

God, when he led thee by the way. Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings reprove thee : know, therefore, and see that it is an evil thing and bitter that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord of Hosts. Repent and turn from all your transgressions ; so iniquity shall not be your ruin."

God, in his infinite mercy, gave her grace to repent, and she turned "to the Lord with full purpose of heart." The language of her lips, and the feelings of her soul were expressive of contrite resignation and of Christian faith. "The Lord hath chastened me sore, but he hath not given me over unto death. I will praise thee, for thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation. Depart from me all ye workers of iniquity ; for the Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping. The Lord hath heard my supplication, the Lord will receive my prayer."

It is "the sorrow of the world that worketh death ;" but godly sorrow, and such was Elizabeth's, worketh repentance unto life eternal. As her mind became calmed, health was gradually restored, and she was enabled to leave the

hospital, and once more seek a service: but she did not do this with that careless indifference, and recklessness of consequences, which she had before done. After a little time, she was successful in her inquiries, and obtained a situation where she was very comfortable, and enjoyed the high privilege of Christian communion. Previous to her entering upon this place, she broke off all correspondence with Richard. She read with reverence and obedience the apostolic command, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers." She looked back upon the danger she had escaped; she contemplated with awe and gratitude the deep abyss into which she had so nearly fallen, and blessed the interposing power that had mercifully snatched her thence.

Elizabeth was now a Christian in the proper acceptation of the term. She had sought for pardon through the great atonement; she was a believer in Jesus, and it was her earnest and fervent prayer, that she might never again bring dishonour and reproach upon that holy name, by which she was called. She was no longer self-confident, but humble; she knew by experience, that of herself she could do

nothing; she felt her weakness, and was led to call upon the strong for strength. She no longer cavilled, because, through the blindness of her understanding, she could not clearly comprehend the whole of the sublime mysteries of the Christian faith. She now submitted her weak reason to the high authority of divine revelation, satisfied that though there was much above its powers, there was nothing contrary or contradictory to it. Like Mary, she was led to sit in child-like simplicity at the feet of Jesus. And here, my reader, we must all be brought, if we would rightly learn, and clearly understand the things that make for our peace. We must have Christ formed in our souls "the hope of glory." "We must believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder of all those who diligently seek him." We must supplicate the influences of the Spirit of God upon our hearts, for it is his gracious office to enlighten the eyes of our understandings, and to take of the things of Christ, and show them unto us. It is his gracious influence that softens our hearts, that regenerates and renews us in the spirit of our mind. When we read the oracles of divine truth, we must entreat that enlightening grace

by which we may discern what is the mind of the Spirit. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." The Bible is of divine origin, of divine authority; with what reverence then ought it to be read and heard! Our Saviour commanded that we should "search the Scriptures," that we might trace their sacred connection with himself; and this was one part of the grand design for which they were given. In the first and second chapters of the Holy Book, we read the sublime and interesting account of the creation of the world—of the formation of man—of his glorious state, placed in "the garden of God," in Eden's happy bower, there enjoying the sweetest communion with his maker. But, alas! we go not far in the sacred record, before we read with sorrow the dire reverse, and behold the introduction of moral evil into the world. Yet wonderful mercy! "Hear, O heavens, and be astonished, O earth!" the same page that records the awful transgression of our first parents, promises also a Saviour, "the seed of

the woman"—"the virgin born"—"the Son of God," and "the Son of man." The Bible makes known to us our state as sinners ; it shows the inflexible justice, and the perfect holiness of our Creator, and it points out the only escape from deserved punishment, and restoration to the favour of God. The great atonement was prefigured, and set forth in all the types and shadows of the Jewish ritual, and there is nothing in all the ceremonies of the tabernacle, but bore a reference to the sacrifice that was to be offered by our great High Priest, even the sacrifice of himself. In every book, and in almost every page of the Old Testament, this object is kept in view. David's holy songs, the rapt inspiration of the Prophets, their mystic visions, and their clearer revelations, all point to Jesus Christ. He is the Sun of Righteousness, to whom, as to their centre orb, all their rays converge. He is the Emmanuel, or God with us. He is the "Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, the first and the last, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty." He is the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star." This great and glorious character is worthy of all our trust and confidence. This

divine Redeemer hath bought us by his blood, and hath wrought out a complete salvation for all who, with adoring gratitude and humble faith, prostrate themselves at the foot of his cross. By the wondrous atonement which he offered, sin is pardoned, and a rebel race reconciled. "Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto his sorrow." Ah! who can tell what were the sufferings, what the agony of the Saviour whilst enduring the curse--whilst drinking the bitter cup that might not pass from him, as the sinner's surety and substitute! Behold him in the garden of Gethsemane! What then must have been his conflict! what his mental anguish, when his sacred body was bathed, as it were, with his own blood!

If, when the Saviour made his entrance upon this earth, his advent was celebrated by the glad hosannas of angels, what must have been their rapture, when, having finished the work which his Father had given him to do, he rose triumphant from the tomb, and ascended up on high, making the clouds his chariot! Then surely did the song of wonder, adoration, and praise, render all heaven vocal. "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in."

CHAPTER XII.

"Hark ! they whisper, angels say
 ' Sister spirit, come away.'
 What is this absorbs me quite,
 Steals my senses, shuts my sight,
 Drowns my spirit, draws my breath,
 Tell me, my soul, can this be death ?

"The world recedes, it disappears—
 Heaven opens on my eyes—my ears
 With sounds seraphic ring :
 Lend, lend your wings—I mount, I fly—
 O Grave ! where is thy victory ?
 O Death ! where is thy sting ?"

Pope.

LEAVING Elizabeth in the possession of more comfort and peace of mind than she had ever experienced, while a backslider from the ways of God, we return to the peaceful village, and revisit the abodes of piety and content. The honest and faithful account which she had transmitted of her wanderings, and of her repentance, was received by her friends and early benefactors with emotions of pleasure and gratitude. "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation:" this was the spontaneous effusion of her aged parent. "Rejoice with me," said the good woman to those who visited and congratulated

her, "for this my child was dead, but is alive again ; was lost, but is found."

But pleasure, even though derived from the purest source, is not, in this world of woe, long to be enjoyed without alloy. Just at this time the excellent Mrs. Lawrence was taken ill ; her disorder was soon pronounced fatal ; neither the tears of her children and friends, nor the sorrowing of the poor could divert the impending stroke. The last enemy is no respecter of persons ;" he brings to a level the high and the low, the prince and the peasant. He enters, without let or hindrance, the palace and the cottage. Happy is it for those who, having fled "for refuge to the hope set before them in the Gospel," have no reason for dismay or dread. For them he has no sting, presents no terror ; but, on the contrary, appears as a smiling messenger, sent to usher the waiting spirit into the visible presence of its God. As such was he viewed and welcomed by the faithful follower of Jesus who now waited his approach.

The chamber of death is, and ought to be, most solemn and impressive. A human being lies gasping for breath ; a soul is about to take its departure into another world—to enter upon a new state of existence—to exchange time for

eternity ; where happiness or misery—heaven or hell, must be its portion. Pause, O my soul, and consider ! What, if this night the summons should be sent for thee, would be thy award ? It is thy desire to die the *death* of the righteous ; but has it been thy care to live the *life* of the righteous ? If it has not, deceive thyself no longer ; “ without holiness no one shall see the Lord.” Put not off the awful consideration which now presses upon thee. “ *Now* is the accepted time ; behold *now* is the day of salvation :” give not sleep to thine eyes, nor slumber to thine eye-lids, till thou hast sought for pardon and acceptance, through the mediation of the ever-blessed Son of God.

Mrs. Lawrence experienced all the consolations of Christianity ; and she found them to be neither few nor small. She was enabled to smile at death, and to look, with the bright eye of faith, beyond the grave. “ I know,” said she, in the language of the pious patriarch, “ that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand, at the latter day, upon the earth : and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh I shall see God :”—and thus, with Paul, “ I know that if the earthly house of this, my tabernacle, were dissolved, I have a building of God, an house not made with

hands, eternal in the heavens." "O!" said she to her children and friends surrounding her bed, "that I could take you all with me, to my Father's house, where there are many mansions. Weep not for me, my dear children; only hold on your Christian course; turn not aside from following the Lord, and we shall soon meet again, to part no more for ever. I go to join my beloved partner in the realms of bliss; with him I shall again bow before the throne of the Eternal: but not, as was the case here, defiled with sin, and laden with imperfection, but washed in the blood of the Lamb of God, and clothed in the white robes of a Saviour's righteousness. Glorious state! perfect felicity! I shall join the society of the holy angels, and the spirits of the redeemed, and shall be myself as holy and as pure as they, for evermore. Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly: into thy hands I commend my spirit."

Each one present felt that her chamber was "privileged beyond the common walk of virtuous life, quite on the verge of heaven." A celestial atmosphere was diffused around; and when she sweetly fell asleep in Jesus, a holy calm of heavenly resignation soothed the spirits of the mourners. They sorrowed indeed for their bereavement; and who could forbid

their tears? When such a mother—such a friend—such a Christian is removed from this earthly scene, “’tis the survivors die.” They deposit the precious dust in the bosom of its parent earth, there to rest till the morning of the resurrection, when it shall be raised incorruptible and glorious. They cherish the remembrance of her virtues, and strive to copy her, as she copied Christ.

A mournful blank however was felt, not only in the domestic circle, but throughout the dwellings of the villagers. Each one had lost a friend. Mrs. Neville was consoled by the hope of soon joining her benefactress in that happy state, where parting will be unknown, and where sorrow can never enter. Poor Margaret was almost inconsolable; her mistress, her beloved mistress would no more counsel or direct her. That voice to which she had so often listened with respectful affection, was now mute; it would no more discourse in soft and eloquent music of a Saviour’s love. Unlike her sister, Margaret as yet had suffered but few trials; her feelings possessed all the unsophisticated sensibility of Nature. Brought up in virtuous simplicity, she had seen nothing of life besides what the peaceful village, and neighbouring town afforded.

Her sister's sorrows called forth her tears, and excited in her bosom the tenderest feelings of compassion ; but affliction like this Margaret had never before known. Time however shed his healing balm ; and she could at length visit the sod that covered the dear remains, and feel that it was not good to wish her back again from the realms of bliss. Her spirits regained their usual cheerful flow ; and, except when the return of pain, in her poor afflicted parent, put her smiles to flight, she was lively and innocently gay. She had been, for some time, an inmate of the lodge, as the good woman was unable to perform even the slight duties of her office. She was now indeed so infirm as to be unable to do without attendance.

Elizabeth paid another visit to her grandmother and gladdened the hearts of her best friends by her altered character ; her manners, as well as her sentiments having undergone a pleasing change. She expressed, in warm and animated terms, the gratitude of her heart for that attention and care exercised over her in her younger years, and for that invaluable instruction they had bestowed upon her. "I have reason," said she, "to thank my dear teachers that I am able to peruse and value the holy book of God ; for without this instruction

I should most probably have fallen a victim to the insidious arts of the infidel." It was now her desire to keep close to its heavenly precepts; it was a light to her feet, and a lamp to her path. She was much respected in the family, where she had now the happiness to serve. After staying a proper time with her friends in the country, she once more returned to her duties in the situation it had pleased God to place her in. She is esteemed and beloved by all to whom she is known, and who are capable of appreciating the tried and steady virtues and graces of the Christian.

Elizabeth's former lover broached his sceptical opinions in every society into which he obtained admittance; and while the world smiled, and his prospects in life were gay, he even found admirers and imitators. But though vice may triumph for awhile; and infidelity, with its serpent hiss, ridicule and deride the word of divine truth with seeming security—though no thunder should shake the heavens, and the lightning's vivid flash pass harmlessly over the head of the blasphemer, and the arm of divine vengeance be not uplifted to destroy, yet

"Heaven is just,
And it has judgments terrible and sure."

Yes, the word of God standeth upon its own firm and immoveable basis, and the scoffer only chews the bitter ashes of disappointment. He is soon despised, even by those he deems his friends; and let but a little turn of "fortune's fickle scale," change the face of his affairs, and they will be the first to desert him. Thus Richard Copeland has found it: he has lost his business—and as no one will believe that a man of his principles has any integrity, he can obtain the confidence of none. He is in poverty and distress; and though still adhering to his own base principles, (through obstinacy rather than conviction,) he has been brought actually to confess, that they have never done him any good, they have produced no comfort, they present no hope.

With what care ought youth in particular to shun the paths of the destroyer! While their minds are yet soft as the yielding wax, to receive impressions, either of good or of evil, how cautious ought they to be, lest they should have the seal of the latter stamped upon their souls! Think seriously, fear not, my reader, to give reflection free scope; these characters have been delineated with the pen of truth—they are sketched from life: and though feeble be the hand that has drawn them, possessed of

little skill, graced with little talent, and wholly unfit to give them their just and proper colouring, yet as the likenesses are correct, they deserve your serious attention. Say now, where is true happiness to be found? The Christian alone can tell: the Christian alone feels its enjoyment. Hear the declaration of an inspired prophet, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee." "Great peace," says the royal Psalmist, "have they who love thy law." Peace was the legacy which the divine Redeemer left to all that should be his; not to those only who had seen his face in the flesh, but to all his faithful servants, in every age. "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid." Peace is also the gift of the Holy Spirit; even that peace "which passeth all understanding."

Let us now turn a parting glance upon the other characters in our little history. Mr. and Mrs. Stanley continue to be a blessing to all who come within the sphere of their influence. Mr. Lawrence has taken holy orders, and the parish to which he is appointed, have reason to bless the Most High for having sent them a minister, who will not fear to preach the Gos-

pel of Christ, in all its fullness and freeness, and will “declare the whole counsel of God” “whether men will hear, or whether they will forbear.”

“By him the violated law speaks out its thunders;
And by him, in strains as sweet as angels use,
The gospel whispers peace.”

His excellent sister and her husband, are also exercising the virtues and graces of Christianity, and are bringing up their young and rising family in “the nurture and admonition of the Lord.”

The state and situation of our poor widow we have already detailed. Of Margaret we have a little more to add. This good girl has gained the affections of a pious young man in a respectable situation in life. He has offered to receive her grandmother under his roof, and to attend her with the duty and affection of a son. This, however, remains under consideration; for if Mrs. Neville should feel reluctant to have a new home, (and at her advanced age this is not unlikely,) Margaret determines that no consideration whatever should induce her to leave her grandmother to the care of strangers. She remembers, with pious gratitude, what the good woman has done for herself and her sister—how she prevented their becoming a burden upon the parish, and meeting the hard looks,

and perhaps hard treatment of unfeeling vulgarity—and how she took the hapless orphans to her maternal bosom, and brought them up at the expense of much trouble, and much anxiety—and how she instructed them in the right way, and imbued their youthful minds with the love of truth. Margaret thought on all this, and her resolution was formed. “No, my dear grandmother,” exclaimed the good girl, “I will never quit you. I will continue to work for you, as you formerly did for me. I will comfort your old age, and nurse and console you in the hour of suffering. You shall lean upon no arm but mine; it shall still be my delight to attend, with duteous affection, your feeble and tottering steps.”

We leave Margaret to the performance of her sacred duties, satisfied that, even in this life her filial affection and gratitude will not go without their reward. “Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.”

Should the perusal of these pages prove a *warning and example* to any—should they be successful in fixing one serious thought, and directing one serious inquiry after true happiness, the heart of the writer will be gladdened, and her labour of love abundantly rewarded.



